**The Kindergarten Guide**

**2013**

**Accessible version for use with screen reader**

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**About this guide**

The *Kindergarten Guide* provides detailed information about:

* the types of kindergarten funding available
* eligibility criteria
* how to apply for funding
* how to comply with operational requirements once funding has been granted.

The guide is designed to assist service providers in Victoria that:

* provide kindergarten programs for children in the year prior to school
* currently receive or want to receive kindergarten funding from the Department.

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| **Navigating the guide**  The *Kindergarten Guide* is divided into three parts:   * Part Acontains information about funding for kindergarten programs **for children in the year prior to school**. * Part B contains information about a **second year of funded kindergarten**. * Part C contains information about the **Early Start Kindergarten** program.   The table of contents and index can be used to quickly find relevant information within this guide. Downloading the electronic version from the Department’s website allows you to follow the links to other parts of this document and websites provided throughout this document. |

This edition of the *Kindergarten Guide* replaces previous editions of *Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria* and supplements issued prior to 2013.

From time to time supplements to this guide may be published on the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development’s (the Department) website. The *Kindergarten Guide* should be read in conjunction with any published supplements, which can be downloaded and stored with this guide.

The forms mentioned in this guide are available on the Department’s website.

**This version of the Kindergarten Guide 2013 has been formatted in order to be accessible to people with vision impairment who are using a screen reader. Readers not using a screen reader should access the PDF version available at:** [**www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx**](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx)

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**The Kindergarten Guide 2013**

**Part A:** Policy, procedures and funding criteria **for service providers offering kindergarten programs to children in the year before school**

# A.1 The kindergarten system in Victoria

## What is kindergarten?

Each state and territory has its own early child education and care system. Nationally, the term preschool refers to an early childhood educational program delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher to children in the year that is two years before grade one of school.

In Victoria, preschool is referred to as kindergarten. The term qualified early childhood teacher refers to a person who holds an early childhood teaching qualification that is included on the list of approved early childhood teaching qualifications published by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority.

Kindergarten programs provide an educational program in which qualified early childhood teachers and educators work to engage each child in effective learning, thereby promoting communication, learning and thinking, positive relationships and identity.

In most cases, services and service providers delivering kindergarten programs are regulated under the *National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care* and are required to:

* work towards achieving high-quality in all seven quality areas defined in theNational Quality Standards:
  + educational program and practice
  + children’s health and safety
  + physical environment
  + staffing arrangements
  + relationships with children
  + collaborative partnerships with families and communities
  + leadership and service management
* implement the practice principles of an approved learning framework, such as the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* or the National *Early Years Learning Framework*, which describe the most effective ways for early childhood professionals to work together with children and families to facilitate learning and development, consistent with framework outcomes.

The outcomes shared by the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* and the *Early Years Learning Framework* are that children:

* have a strong sense of identity (identity)
* are connected with and contribute to their world (community)
* have a strong sense of wellbeing (wellbeing)
* are confident and involved learners (learning)
* are effective communicators (communication).

A range of service providers operate funded kindergarten programs, including:

* local government
* community-based incorporated associations
* private and community-based child care providers
* non-government and government schools.

Programs offered by local government and community-based organisations may be offered as part of a kindergarten cluster (where a single service provider manages several services).

To meet the needs of children and families kindergarten programs are provided in a variety of settings including:

* standalone kindergartens
* long day care centres
* children’s centres
* community centres
* schools.

### The importance of high-quality early childhood education and care services including kindergarten

Engaging children in high-quality learning experiences benefits all children and their families and can improve a child’s learning and development outcomes, emotional wellbeing, their longer-term educational and social outcomes and life experience.

Participation in high-quality programs that support families to understand and engage with their child’s learning and development can foster positive outcomes and lessen the effects of disadvantage. Research shows that providing high-quality early childhood services, extra support for families and appropriate early intervention are effective ways to break cycles of disadvantage.

## Kindergarten funding in Victoria: an overview

### Aims of kindergarten funding

#### Access and inclusion

The Department has a range of funding mechanisms to promote participation in high-quality kindergarten programs delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher in the year before school.

In addition, some children are eligible to receive targeted funding to attend a kindergarten program two years before school.

The aim of kindergarten funding is to promote participation of all eligible children, including those that research suggests are less likely to be enrolled in kindergarten, such as:

* children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
* children from some rural and remote areas
* aboriginal children
* children from a low socio-economic background
* children with no employed parent.

#### Building a stronger kindergarten system

The Department provides funding to support service providers in transitioning to, and operating under, the kindergarten cluster management model. This model brings together a group of community-based kindergartens under the management of a single service provider.

Kindergarten cluster management is a key strategy to build a stronger and more responsive and effective kindergarten system across the state, which:

* reduces the administrative and management burden on kindergarten parent volunteer committees
* strengthens the management, planning and delivery of community-based kindergarten programs
* provides kindergarten staff with professional employment arrangements, including professional development and networking opportunities.

### Types of kindergarten funding

The **kindergarten per capita grant** is the main type of funding available from the Department. Service providers can apply to receive a grant for each eligible child who is enrolled and attending a funded kindergarten program in the year before school. The grant rate may vary depending on the service setting and where the service is located.

In addition to per capita grants, the Department provides the following types of funding:

* **kindergarten cluster management** funding to contribute to the costs of management and coordination of services across a cluster
* **kindergarten fee subsidy and Early Start Kindergarten extension grant**, to enable eligible children to attend a funded kindergarten program free of charge or at minimal cost
* **funding for a second year of kindergarten** for children who have delays in key areas of development and would benefit from a second year of kindergarten
* **Early Start Kindergarten grant**, which enables an eligible child to access two years of funded kindergarten prior to school
* **early childhood teacher supplement** to offset the cost of employing more experienced teachers
* **travel allowance** to help funded kindergarten programs in rural areas attract qualified early childhood teachers
* **parental leave reimbursement** for service providers that have paid parental leave entitlements to early childhood teachers and assistants delivering funded kindergarten programs
* **small rural grants initiative** to support access to affordable kindergarten programs in small rural communities.

To be eligible for **kindergarten per capita grants** a service provider must meet all the criteria and operational requirements laid out in Part A, Section Two and Section Three.

In order to receive **any other type of kindergarten funding**, with the exception of Early Start Kindergarten grants, a service provider must:

* be receiving kindergarten per capita grants and
* meet any additional criteria and operational requirements for the specific type of funding.

### Terminology

In addition to providing kindergarten funding through service agreements, the Department, as Regulatory Authority for Victoria under the *National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care*, approves providers to operate approved education and care services from which kindergarten programs are offered.

In this guide, to simplify language, the generic term **service provider** has been used throughout to mean an organisation that receives or is seeking to receive funding from the Department and is the approved provider delivering the kindergarten program. The education and care service from which the program is offered is referred to as the **service**.

The term **funded kindergarten program** refers to a kindergarten program for children in the year before school for which funding is received from the Department.

### Regional office contacts

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has a central office in Melbourne and offices in four regions across the state:

* North-Eastern region
* North-Western region
* South-Eastern region
* South-Western region

In each region, designated Departmental staff:

* assist with and receive applications for funding
* process funding applications and manage approvals
* manage the Department’s service agreements with service providers
* manage payment processes
* monitor compliance with funding criteria and operational requirements.

Contact your regional office for further information or queries about kindergarten funding.

In addition, each region has specialist staff to assist with:

* implementation of 15 hours of kindergarten
* kindergarten cluster management
* the participation of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children in kindergarten programs
* Kindergarten Inclusion Support Packages.

Service providers are encouraged to maintain regular contact with the appropriate [Departmental regional office](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/pages/regions.aspx?Redirect=1).

## Partnership with local government

Local government plays a key role in improving the coordination and strategic planning of early childhood services at the local level. Additionally, local government is a significant provider of early childhood services, often taking on the role of kindergarten cluster manager and as the major owner of facilities from which community-based kindergarten programs are offered.

Local councils are responsible for strategic local area planning and often have strategic land use and infrastructure plans in place at the neighbourhood level relevant to the delivery of early childhood services.

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) is the legislated peak body for local government in Victoria.

MAV and the Department have a [formal partnership agreement](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/partnerships/pages/partnermav.aspx) that commits both parties to a collaborative and cooperative approach to the planning and delivery of early childhood services.

The Department funds MAV to undertake projects related to the provision of early childhood services. The agreement between MAV and the Victorian Government sets out agreed principles to guide state-local government relations, and acknowledges the key role of local government.

#### Municipal Early Years Plans

Municipal Early Years Plans (MEYPs) are local area plans designed to provide a strategic direction for the development and coordination of education and care programs, health programs, and other local activities that support children from birth to six years and their families.

All local councils undertake early years planning processes, which consider the specific needs of the municipality.

Sections Two and Five of Part A of this guide specify the requirements for service providers to [contact the relevant local government](http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/localgovernment/find-your-local-council) to discuss their service in the context of the Municipal Early Years Plan before applying for kindergarten funding from the Department.

#### Central enrolment

Most local councils operate a central enrolment or registration system for local kindergarten services. MAV has developed a *‘Central Registrations Framework and Resource Guide’* to support local governments currently operating central enrolment schemes and to encourage more local government areas to introduce this process.

## National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care

In December 2009, all Australian governments agreed to a new *National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care* (the *National Quality Framework*), which took effect on 1 January 2012.

The new system replaced existing state and territory licensing and national quality assurance processes.

The *National Quality Framework* applies to most preschools (kindergartens), long day care, family day care and outside school hours care services.

### About the National Quality Framework

The *National Quality Framework* aims to raise quality and drive continuous improvement and consistency in education and care services, with a focus on outcomes for children.

The *National Quality Framework* includes:

* a legislative framework consisting of:
  + the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* (the National Law) and
  + the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* (the National Regulations)
* a National Quality Standard, used to carry out a national quality rating and assessment process
* approved learning frameworks, including the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* and the *Early Years Learning Framework*
* bodies responsible for implementing the *National Quality Framework.*

The [Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority](http://acecqa.gov.au/resources-and-templates/national-quality-framework-resource-kits/) (ACECQA) is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the *National Quality Framework*.

Each state has a Regulatory Authority with responsibility for:

* approving and monitoring education and care services in accordance with the National Law and National Regulations
* assessing education and care services against the National Quality Standard and providing a national quality rating.

In Victoria, the Regulatory Authority is the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (the Department).

Some requirements of the *National Quality Framework* are being phased in. For example, by 2016, educator-to-child ratios will be 1:11 for children aged 36 months up to and including preschool age.

### The National Quality Framework in Victoria

Most funded kindergarten programs in Victoria are now offered in approved education and care services operated by approved providers under the *National Quality Framework,* and assessed by the Regulatory Authority (the Department) against the National Quality Standard to receive a quality rating.

A small number of services providing kindergarten programs are not covered by the *National Quality Framework* and are instead licensed by the Victorian *Children’s Services Act 1996* (Victorian Act) and *Children’s Services Regulations 2009* (Victorian Regulations) or the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006.*[[1]](#footnote-2)

The Department operates a Licensed Children’s Services Enquiry Line to provide information about the National Quality Framework. Services can phone: 1300 307 415 or email: licensed.child.services@edumail.vic.gov.au

## Other relevant policy

### Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework

The [*Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework*](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/eyldf/default.htm) advances all children’s learning and development from birth to eight years. It does this by supporting all early childhood professionals to work together and with families to achieve positive outcomes for all children.

The *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* is an overarching framework, which works in conjunction with the Victorian Essential Learning Standards and the Australian Curriculum (AusVELS) for schools, the Maternal and Child Health Service [*Key Ages and Stages Framework*](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/mch/serv_activity_frameworkmar09.pdf), and Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS) resources.

The *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework*:

* identifies five **early years learning and development outcomes** for all children aged from birth to eight, which provide a shared language for all early childhood professionals and families to use when planning for children’s learning and development
* describes the most effective ways for early childhood professionals to work together and with children and families by identifying eight **practice principles for learning and development**, categorised as collaborative, effective and reflective
* emphasises the importance of supporting children and families as they **transition** within and across services throughout the early childhood period.

The *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* is an approved learning framework under the National Quality Framework and shares its outcomes with the National Early Years Learning Framework.

Visit the Department’s website to download a series of [guides](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/edcare/pages/profresource.aspx?Redirect=1) to the Victorian Early Years Learning

and Development Framework practice principles for learning and development.

### National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education

In 2008, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) endorsed the [National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education](http://deewr.gov.au/national-partnership-agreement-early-childhood-education), to achieve the following aims:

* *By 2013, every child will have access to a quality early childhood education program in the year prior to formal schooling.*
* *The kindergarten program will be delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher, for 15 hours a week, 40 weeks a year (or 600 hours per year), in accordance with the National Quality Framework.*
* *The program will be accessible across a diversity of settings in a form that meets the needs of parents and in a manner that ensures cost does not present a barrier to access.*

The Commonwealth Government provides funding to the Victorian Government to assist in implementing the National Partnership Agreement.

### National Partnership Agreement for Indigenous Early Childhood Development

In 2009, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to the revised [National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development](http://www.coag.gov.au/node/143), with the following targets:

* *halve the gap in mortality rates within a decade for Indigenous children under five*
* *ensure all Indigenous four-year-olds in remote communities have access to early childhood education within five years*
* *ensure every child has access to a preschool program in the 12 months prior to full-time schooling by 2013*
* *halve the gap for Indigenous students in reading, writing and numeracy within a decade.*

As part of this agreement, a key strategy for improved services and outcomes for Indigenous children and their families is to integrate early childhood services through the development of Children and Family Centres. These will deliver integrated services, including early learning, child care and family support programs.

### Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework

The [*Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2013 – 2018*](http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/124575/DOC-CENTRAL_n2350971_v1_AAT_-_VAAF_FINAL_web_version_-_15_November_2012.pdf), released in November 2012, guides and coordinates the efforts of the Victorian Government in partnership with Victoria’s Aboriginal communities. The framework focuses long term, strategic and progressive effort to improve the health and quality of life of Aboriginal Victorians, and aligns closely with the targets of the Council of Australian Governments.

### Victorian Wannik education strategy

[Wannik Learning Together - Journey to Our Future](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/wannik/aboutwannik.htm) is an education strategy which aims to reduce disparity in educational outcomes between Koorie and non-Koorie students in Victoria.

### Workforce strategies

The Department has a range of [strategies to support Victoria’s early childhood workforce](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/careers/Pages/scholarships.aspx). Strategies include:

* a qualifications fund that supports early childhood staff to upgrade or attain early childhood qualifications
* a scholarship fund that supports Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people to upgrade or attain early childhood qualifications
* an incentive fund to attract early childhood staff to services in hard-to-staff locations
* a range of scholarships, incentives and professional training to support and encourage professionals to work in an early childhood intervention service
* professional development courses offered through the [Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership](https://www.bastow.vic.edu.au/Pages/Home.aspx), designed to build capacity of leaders in early childhood settings
* professional development training, resources and advice through [Gowrie Victoria](http://www.gowrievictoria.org.au/).

Professional training and development for early childhood professionals focuses on the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework*.

### Protecting Victoria’s Vulnerable Children

In 2012, the Protecting Victoria’s Vulnerable Children Inquiry found that universal early education and care services were not as inclusive of vulnerable children and families as they should be. The Victorian Government’s response in the discussion paper [*Victoria’s Vulnerable Children – Our Shared Responsibility*](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/victorias-vulnerable-children-our-shared-responsibility)identified a responsibility shared by government and other services to work together “to prevent child abuse and neglect, reduce the impact when it does occur, and improve the outcomes for children and young people in the statutory child protection system.”[[2]](#footnote-3)

The discussion paper emphasises the key role of the education system in achieving these goals and notes that:

*Some vulnerable children and families need more help to engage with these services. Better access to services would enable [the Victorian Government] to intervene earlier to help families more effectively engage with the services they need to address their problems. Better engagement will lead to better outcomes. [[3]](#footnote-4)*

Service providers receiving funding from the Department are required to operate in accordance with the *Protecting the Safety and Wellbeing of Children and Young People* protocol, and must have policies in place that enable eligible children to access a kindergarten program, including those who face barriers to participation.

The Department provides funding, such as the Early Start Kindergarten grant and kindergarten fee subsidy, to promote participation of vulnerable children in funded kindergarten programs.

# A.2 Kindergarten funding: criteria and operational requirements

## Eligibility criteria for new service providers or new services

Service providers must meet a set of criteria in order to receive any type of kindergarten funding from the Department.

In order to attract kindergarten funding, service(s) operated by a service provider must fall into one of the following categories:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Regulated under which legal framework?** |
| Approved education and care service operated by an approved provider. | National Quality Framework: Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (National Law) and Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (National Regulations). |
| Services excluded from the National Quality Framework by National Regulations, Regulation 5. | Victorian Children’s Services Act 1996 (Victorian Act) and Children’s Services Regulations 2009 (Victorian Regulations). |
| Services excluded from the National Quality Framework by National Law, Section 5. | Education and Training Reform Act 2006. |

Service providers must also meet:

* the core funding eligibility criteria below and
* the criteria specific to the type(s) of funding for which they wish to apply.

| **Core eligibility criteria for applying for kindergarten funding from the Department** | **For more information go to** |
| --- | --- |
| The service provider must have an Australian Business Number (ABN). | [www.business.gov.au](http://www.business.gov.au) |
| The education and care service or Victorian Children’s Service from which the kindergarten program is offered must be located in Victoria. |  |
| If a service has been assessed by the Regulatory Authority (the Department) against the National Quality Standard, the service must have a rating of ‘Working Towards National Quality Standard’ or higher.[[4]](#footnote-5) | <http://acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/assessment-and-ratings/> |
| Service providers must have a business plan and budgets showing ongoing financially viability. | [Early Learning Association Australia](http://www.kpv.org.au/) (formerly Kindergarten Parents Victoria, KPV) has budgeting resources. |
| Service providers must demonstrate that the service aligns with the Municipal Early Years Plan where applicable. | Make contact with a relevant local government officer: <http://www.mav.asn.au/about-local-government/council-details/Pages/council-details.aspx> |
| Service providers must offer a kindergarten program delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher, holding a qualification that appears on the list of early childhood teaching qualifications approved by ACECQA and published in accordance with the National Regulations. | *Requirement to have an early childhood teacher* on 12. |
| Service providers must offer a kindergarten program offering a minimum of 15 hours of kindergarten per week for 40 weeks per year, or a minimum of 600 hours per year, delivered by an early childhood teacher. | *National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education* on page 8. |
| Services must have a minimum of 20 enrolments unless they:  are operated by an approved kindergarten cluster manager or a school  are operated as part of a long day care service  are eligible for funding at the rural per capita rate | *Section Three – Kindergarten per capita grants* on page 36. |
| Service providers must sign and comply with a DEECD service agreement and operate in accordance with the standards and guidelines detailed in the agreement. | *Service agreement* on page 13. |

### Requirement to have an early childhood teacher

The teachers who deliver a funded kindergarten program must hold a qualification that appears on the list of early childhood teaching qualifications approved by the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).

Teachers with an early childhood teaching qualification not listed as an approved qualification may apply to ACECQA to have their qualification recognised as equivalent to an approved qualification. (Note: A fee applies to this process.)

### Service agreement

In order to receive kindergarten funding from the Department service providers are required to sign and comply with a service agreement.

The service agreement sets out:

* how much funding the Department agrees to make available to the service provider and what the service provider agrees to provide for this funding
* the terms and conditions the service provider must comply with in using and accounting for the funding.

The agreement covers a set period of time, most commonly three years.

The Department’s regional offices are responsible for managing service agreements relating to kindergarten funding.

After a service agreement is signed, funding entitlements for kindergarten programs for children in the year before school is determined through the annual April confirmed data collection.

Service provider staff, board or committee members can register to access the service agreement

and funding and payment information from the [Funded Agency Channel](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/funded-agency-channel) (FAC).

Contact the eBusiness administrator on 1300 799 470 or email ebiz@dhs.vic.gov.au to register for the FAC. View the [Service Agreement Information Kit for Funded Organisations](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/facs/bdb/fmu/service-agreement).

### Provision of 15 hours

Service providers in receipt of funding from the Department that offer kindergarten programs for children in the year before school are expected to provide a program delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher for 15 hours per week (or 600 hours per year).

In 2013, the majority of Victorian services will be offering a 15 hour kindergarten program for children in the year before school. However some service providers will still be working with their communities and the Department to enable the delivery of a 15 hour program, and will be funded at a 10.75 hour rate*.*

## Operational requirements for service providers funded by the Department

Once a kindergarten funding application has been successful, the service provider must:

* continue to meet the criteria detailed above on page [insert #], including meeting the relevant regulatory requirements
* continue to meet the criteria specific to the type(s) of funding which it receives (see Section Three, Four and Five), and
* meet the operational requirements detailed below

In some cases service providers unable to meet operational requirements may be eligible for continued funding.

The operational requirements cover five areas:

* displaying information and communicating effectively
* providing reports and data
* planning and delivering the program
* managing the service
* managing teachers

Please note that regulatory requirements are not detailed in the *Kindergarten Guide*. Service providers are responsible for understanding and complying with regulatory requirements.

### Operational requirements: displaying information and communicating effectively

The following table outlines operational requirements for service providers with regard to displaying information and communicating effectively with families.

| **Operational requirement** | **For more information  go to** |
| --- | --- |
| The following must be displayed at each service:   * the current Kindergarten Program Certificate * a notice indicating the times during which the program operates each week and * the name(s) of the qualified early childhood teachers delivering the program. | *Kindergarten Program Certificates* on page 14. |
| Service providers must provide written confirmation to parents that their child is receiving a funded kindergarten program, including information about the times at which the program is provided. | <http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/childrensservices/kinderlettertemplate.doc> |
| Service providers must communicate information about fees, waiting lists, and access and inclusion policies to parents. | *Communicating with families – what information to provide at the beginning of the kindergarten year* on page 15. |
| Service providers must provide information to parents at the commencement of the kindergarten year about session times being offered during the year and the impact of any professional development activities and child free days. | *Communicating with families – what information to provide at the beginning of the kindergarten year* on page 15. |
| Service providers are required to provide a *Transition Learning and Development Statement* for all children starting prep in the following year. | <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/transitionschool/transitionstatement.htm>  *Transition Learning and Development Statements* on page 15. |

#### *Kindergarten Program Certificates*

Kindergarten Program Certificates are issued by the Department to service providers receiving kindergarten per capita funding. These are issued at the start of each year or after a new service agreement has been signed.

Communicating with families – what information to provide at the beginning of the kindergarten yearService providers must provide all families with each of the following when a child enrols and begins to attend a funded kindergarten program:

* written confirmation that they are receiving a funded kindergarten program
* a fees policy, with an explanation of what it means and what families are required to pay, a list of the days and times the service will operate[[5]](#footnote-6), including planned closures for activities such as staff development and training
* information about additional support available to enhance the learning and development needs of all children (for more information see *Supporting children* on page 20).

Upon enrolment, service providers should also:

* provide information about how families can be involved and contribute to the kindergarten program
* provide information about why personal information is collected from families and how it is stored (for more information see *Privacy and information sharing* on page 34)
* provide information about the service’s emergency management plan (see page 29)
* encourage parents of children starting primary school the following year to begin the [process of enrolling](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/primary/Pages/enrol.aspx) in a timely manner (primary schools may begin accepting enrolments as early as May of the year before a child is due to start school).

Communicating with families – what information to provide at the end of the kindergarten yearServices must provide all families with a *Transition Learning and Development Statement* by the end of the kindergarten year, and shouldalso provide families with information about starting school.

##### Transition Learning and Development Statements

Early childhood teachers delivering a funded kindergarten program are required to prepare a *Transition Learning and Development Statement* for every child transitioning into school in the following year. The *Transition Learning and Development Statement* is a tool for families and educators to share information about a child’s learning and development.

At the end of the kindergarten year, service providers must provide each family with a *Transition Learning and Development Statement* for their child and in the following year provide information to the Department about the transition statement process in the kindergarten data collection process.

The statement provides valuable information to parents about a child’s learning and development in the early years. It also helps schools—particularly prep teachers:

* build relationships with the child and family
* identify the child’s strengths, interests and abilities
* understand how the child can best be supported as they transition into school
* plan appropriate learning programs that meet their individual needs.

The statement links to other initiatives that support transitions, such as the [*Sharing Our Journey*](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/healthwellbeing/sharingourjourneyprotocol.pdf) process for children with additional needs, to provide a cohesive approach to transition for all children moving into the first year of school. Visit the [Transition to School](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/learning/Pages/transition.aspx) page on the Department’s website for resources to assist in completing Transition Learning and Development Statements or contact [psts@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:psts@edumail.vic.gov.au)

The Department provides resources and guidance to assist service providers to fulfil this requirement, including a [*Transition: A Positive Start to School Resource Kit*](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/learning/trkall.pdf) which includes information and advice to improve the development and planning of local transition to school processes and programs.

Developed by the Department in consultation with early childhood and school educators, [*The Strength-based approach: A guide to writing Transition Learning and Development Statements*](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/learning/strengthbasedapproach.pdf) aims to further early childhood and school educators’ understanding of the strength-based approach and its application to writing and interpreting *Transition Learning and Development Statements*. Early childhood teachers can use this resource to learn more about the strength-based approach and to assist in writing and interpreting *Transition Learning and Development Statements*.

Visit the Department’s website for further details on the [information sharing and privacy requirements](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/learning/Pages/transkitprivacy.aspx) related to the Transition Learning and Development Statement.

##### Information about starting school

The [*Welcome to Primary School: A Parent’s Guide to Victorian Government Primary Schools*](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/commrel/backtoschool/welcomeprimary.pdf) booklet provides parents of future prep children with information about the government school system and advice about how they can assist their child’s transition from kindergarten to school. All kindergarten service providers receive copies of the Welcome to Primary School booklet in early November. Additional copies of the booklet are available from Information Victoria (English only) by contacting 1300 366 356, or [www.information.vic.gov.au](http://www.information.vic.gov.au). Copies can also be obtained by emailing [parenthandbook@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:parenthandbook@edumail.vic.gov.au).

### Operational requirements: planning and delivering the program

The following table outlines the operational requirements for service providers with regard to planning and delivering the kindergarten program.

| **Operational requirement** | **For more information  go to** |
| --- | --- |
| Service providers must deliver a program that aligns with the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* or the National *Early Years Learning Framework*. | *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* on page 8  *National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care* on page 6. |
| From 2016, services will be required to have a minimum rating of ‘Meeting National Quality Standard’ for *Quality Area 1 Educational program and practice*, *Quality Area 4 Staffing Arrangements* and *Quality Area 5 Relationships with children* for service providers to remain eligible for kindergarten funding.[[6]](#footnote-7) | <http://acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/assessment-and-ratings/> |
| Service providers must operate in accordance with the *Protecting the Safety and Wellbeing of Children and Young People* protocol. | *Protecting the Safety and Wellbeing of Children and Young People* on page 17. |
| Service providers must have policies in place that enable eligible children to access a kindergarten program, including those who face barriers to participation. | *Managing access to kindergarten places* on page 18  *Supporting children* on page 20. |

#### Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people

Service providers must operate in accordance with [the *Protecting the Safety and Wellbeing of Children and Young People* protocol](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/protectionprotocol.aspx). This joint protocol details current policy and practice to promote and support the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in Victoria.

The protocol provides information for education and care services and Victorian schools to take appropriate action when it is believed that a child has suffered harm, or is likely to suffer harm, through abuse or neglect.

#### Managing access to kindergarten places

##### Fair and equitable kindergarten enrolment policies

Services must ensure their application and enrolment policies:

* promote fair and equitable access to kindergarten programs
* support all eligible children to access a kindergarten program, including those who face barriers to participation
* do not inadvertently present barriers to participation.

In order to achieve these objectives, service providers need to make sure their enrolment policies:

* comply with Victorian and national legislation, including anti-discrimination and human rights laws[[7]](#footnote-8)
* are developed on the basis of local need determined by surveys of the local community
* support children who are experiencing disadvantage
* address issues of eligibility for funded places, vacant funded places and vacant unfunded places
* outline how waiting lists will be prioritised
* are effectively communicated to families and the local community.

In order to receive kindergarten per capita funding, a child must be at least four years of age on 30 April in the year in which they will attend the kindergarten program (this aligns with the requirement for children to be at least five years of age on 30 April in the year they first attend school).

All children eligible to attend kindergarten in the year before school are entitled to equal access to enrolment, in accordance with anti-discrimination and human rights laws.

Services should avoid enrolment policies which may result in less favourable treatment of children on the basis of protected characteristics, such as disability, age, race and sex. These include enrolment policies which impact adversely on younger children within the eligible cohort such as policies prioritising date of application where applications may be made only once a child reaches a certain age or policies which prioritise and allocate kindergarten places on the basis of a child’s date of birth.

##### Managing kindergarten waiting lists

Sometimes there are more eligible children seeking a place at a kindergarten service than there are places available. When this situation occurs, kindergarten enrolment policy needs to outline how applications for enrolment will be prioritised.

The list of eligible children may be prioritised using one or more criteria. Some service providers apply points or weightings to the criteria, so that all eligible children on the list may be given points, or a score to determine their order on the list.

Other methods may be used, such as balloting of children’s (where names are randomly drawn from a ballot box). The ballot method avoids the use of any criteria or scoring to determine the order of children on a list.

In order to minimise waiting lists, service providers should develop program models that optimise the number of available places, for example, consider increasing group sizes to the full capacity of the space available and employing an additional assistant, or introducing a rotational model of service delivery.

##### Prioritising access to kindergarten places

When prioritising applications, service providers need to be mindful of the barriers that prevent many vulnerable families from early enrolment in kindergarten programs. With this in mind, service providers are encouraged to develop a priority of access policy to assist children at risk of disadvantage to access kindergarten programs.

Where a priority of access policy is adopted, enrolment policies and procedures should clearly identify the ‘high priority’ groups to be given priority when kindergarten places are allocated.

The following table gives a guide to three groups of ‘high priority’ children that are recommended for priority of access to a funded kindergarten program. These categories reflect the Commonwealth guidelines on priority for allocating places in approved child care services.

| **High priority children** | **Process that could be used to verify need(s)** |
| --- | --- |
| Children at risk of abuse or neglect | Referral by:   * Child Protection * [Child and family services information, referral and support team (Child FIRST)](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children,-families-and-young-people/family-and-parenting-support/family-services/child-first-child-and-family-information,-referral-and-support-teams)/Family Services * Maternal and Child Health Nurse * Attendance at Early Start Kindergarten |
| Children in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander families | Family identifies the child as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander |
| Children with additional needs, defined as children:   * who require additional assistance in order to fully participate in the kindergarten program * who require a combination of services which are individually planned * who have an identified specific disability or developmental delay | The child is:   * approved for Kindergarten Inclusion Support Package, or * referred by:   + Early Childhood Intervention Service   + Preschool Field Officer   + Maternal and Child Health Nurse or Enhanced Home Visiting Nurse   + Child Disability Health Care Card |

Where possible, service providers should build flexibility into their processes that take into account the circumstances of vulnerable families. Some enrolment schemes reserve places in the group(s) for late applications from high priority children. Services will need to determine at what date unfilled reserved places are made available to other children on the waiting list (see the framework in *Appendix:* *Managing access to kindergarten places – case studies and framework* on page 90).

For those children who are not identified as ‘high priority’ for access to a funded kindergarten program, service providers may apply one or more locally agreed criteria to prioritise their list of applicants and determine the order in which offers are made, such as residential proximity or a demonstrable link to the service.

It is important to note that whilst the criteria may be guided by government policy, they should be determined locally.

##### Improving access for vulnerable children

Current research shows that although high-quality early childhood education programs can ameliorate negative effects of disadvantage, service providers often find it challenging to engage vulnerable families, and Australian research confirms that the families most in need are those least likely to access programs. Services should work to improve access to high-quality early childhood education for all children. [*Victoria’s Vulnerable Children – Our Shared Responsibility*](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/victorias-vulnerable-children-our-shared-responsibility) points out that “problems that impede effective parenting can also impede effective use of the services that support parents. Difficulties faced by vulnerable families will leave them less confident in dealing with doctors, teachers, child care workers or specialists.” Service providers “might need to engage children of families in different settings, so that vulnerable children do not miss out. Sometimes it may be as simple as a change in attitude, to show people who are distrustful that the service cares about them.”

Service providers should also support teachers to make use of training opportunities and available resources to increase their understanding of the needs of vulnerable children.

The [Centre for Community Child Health](http://www.rch.org.au/ccch) provides training and resources such as Policy Briefs  [*18: Engaging Marginalised and Vulnerable families*](http://ww2.rch.org.au/emplibrary/ccch/PB18_Vulnerable_families.pdf), and  [*4: Services for young children and families*](http://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/ccch/PB4_Children-family_services.pdf).

Visit the Communities and Families Clearinghouse Australia website to download [*Practice Sheet: Are disadvantaged families ‘hard to reach’? Engaging disadvantaged families in child and family services*](http://www.aifs.gov.au/cafca/pubs/sheets/ps/ps1.pdf).

#### Supporting children

A range of resources, services and funding is available to assist service providers in fulfilling their obligations to:

* support all eligible children to access a kindergarten program including those who face barriers to participation
* support children who are experiencing disadvantage.

Visit [the Department of Human Services](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/child-care-benefit) website for information about Child Care Benefit. If a service registers their teacher as a registered carer with the Commonwealth Government Department of Human Services some families may be eligible to receive registered Child Care Benefit, a subsidy from the Commonwealth Government.

##### Support for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children from the Department

Assistance available from the Department to support the inclusion of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children in kindergarten programs includes:

* the kindergarten fee subsidy (see page [insert #])
* the Aboriginal Early Start Kindergarten grant for three-year-old children and Early Start Kindergarten extension grant for children in the year prior to school (see Part C on page [insert #])
* Koorie Engagement Support Officers and Koorie Preschool Assistants.

###### Koorie Engagement Support Officers

Koorie Engagement Support Officers (KESOs) are specialist staff based in the Department’s regional offices who provide information and support to the families of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children, communities, kindergarten staff and management. They seek to increase the participation of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children in kindergarten programs and to encourage service providers to include Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait culture in children’s learning experiences.

###### Koorie Preschool Assistants

Koorie Preschool Assistants (KPSA) are employed by community-based organisations, with funding provided by the Department. KPSAs work with service providers that run kindergarten programs to provide support, increase participation of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait children, encourage involvement of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait families and communities, and promote the delivery of culturally inclusive programs.

##### Support for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children from the Commonwealth Government

The Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations provides supplementary per capita funding through Supplementary Recurrent Assistance (SRA) for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in a kindergarten program. SRA aims to assist service providers to accelerate the educational outcomes for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children beyond those that could reasonably be expected from mainstream and own-source funding. SRA is intended to supplement mainstream funding, not to replace it. Phone the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Indigenous Education Program on **1800 800 821**.

##### Support for vulnerable children from the Department

Assistance available from the Department to support the inclusion of vulnerable children in kindergarten programs includes:

* the kindergarten fee subsidy (see page [insert #])
* the Early Start Kindergarten grant for three-year-old children and Early Start Kindergarten extension grant for children in the year prior to school, available for children known to Child Protection or children referred by Child Protection to Child FIRST (see Part C onpage [insert #]).

Vulnerable children may have additional needs as a result of their experiences and may be eligible for, and benefit from, some of the resources and assistance detailed in this guide.

##### Training and resources for supporting vulnerable children

The [Australian Childhood Foundation](http://www.childhood.org.au/page.aspx?pageID=1145) provides training on trauma, child abuse and family violence.

The Victorian Department of Human Services has developed a [Child development and trauma resource](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-service-providers/children,-youth-and-families/child-protection/specialist-practice-resources-for-child-protection-workers/child-development-and-trauma-specialist-practice-resource) for practitioners.

The Victorian Child Safety Commissioner has developed [*Calmer classrooms: A guide to working with traumatised children*](http://www.kids.vic.gov.au/downloads/calmer_classrooms.pdf) to assist teachers in understanding the needs of children affected by trauma.

##### Support for children with additional needs from the Department

Assistance available from the Department to support the inclusion of children with additional needs in kindergarten programs includes:

* the kindergarten fee subsidy (see page [insert #])
* a second year of funded kindergarten (see Part Bon page [insert #])
* Preschool Field Officers
* Kindergarten Inclusion Support Packages

###### Second year of funded kindergarten

During the kindergarten year, the early childhood teacher and parents work together to plan for a child’s transition to school. A second year of funded kindergarten may be considered when a child is observed to display delays in key areas of development.

Part B on page [insert #] outlines the assessment process teachers should use to determine if a child is eligible for a second year of kindergarten. A child is eligible if:

* the child is observed as having delays in at least two areas of learning and development and
* a second year of kindergarten will help to strengthen the development of skills in these areas and better facilitate transition to school the following year.

Children granted early entry to kindergarten in preparation for early entry to school are not eligible for a second year of kindergarten funding.

###### Preschool Field Officers

The Department funds community service organisations and local governments to provide [Preschool Field Officer (PSFO)](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/needs/Pages/kinderinclusionsupport.aspx) services. The PSFO program provides support to kindergarten service providers to support the access and meaningful participation of children with additional needs in inclusive kindergarten programs through the provision of consultative support, resourcing and advice to early childhood teachers.

###### Kindergarten Inclusion Support Packages

[Kindergarten Inclusion Support Packages](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/needs/Pages/kindersupportpackages.aspx) offer supplementary funding to support the access and participation of eligible children with disabilities and ongoing high-support needs and/or complex medical needs. Kindergarten Inclusion Support Packages may include training for staff, minor building modifications and staffing support.

Assessments undertaken by [Maternal and Child Health Service](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/earlychildhood/mch/default.htm)s can provide valuable information to contribute to preparing an application for a Kindergarten Inclusion Support Package in addition to providing families and educators with valuable information to develop individual learning and development goals.

##### Support for children with additional needs from the Commonwealth Government

[Assistance available from the Commonwealth Government](http://deewr.gov.au/inclusion-support-portal) to support the inclusion of children with additional needs in long day care includes the:

* Inclusion Support Program
* Inclusion Support Subsidy.

###### Inclusion Support Program

Children with additional needs attending a kindergarten program as part of integrated long day care may be able to access support through the Commonwealth funded [Inclusion Support Program](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Programs/ChildCareforServices/SupportFamilyCCS/Pages/InclusionSupportProgram.aspx#inclusion_support). Inclusion support facilitators work directly with eligible child care services to build their capacity and skills base to include children with additional needs.

###### Inclusion Support Subsidy

Commonwealth Government child care services approved for Child Care Benefit, or funded under the Budget Based Funding Program, may be eligible to access the [Inclusion Support Subsidy](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Programs/ChildCareforServices/SupportFamilyCCS/Pages/InclusionSupportProgram.aspx#inclusion_support_subsidy) (ISS). The ISS is paid to child care services as a contribution towards the costs associated with including a child or children with ongoing high support needs in child care.

##### Training and resources for supporting children with additional needs

Resources available from other sources to support the inclusion of children with additional needs in kindergarten programs include:

###### Kindergarten Inclusion Tip Sheets

[The Association for Children with a Disability](http://www.acd.org.au/) has developed a set of Kindergarten Inclusion Tip Sheets to assist parents and teachers to plan a positive kindergarten experience for all children. The tip sheets have been developed by parents for parents, and kindergarten staff may also find them useful. Phone (03) 9818 2000 or 1800 654 013 (rural callers) to order tip sheets.

###### Centre for Community Child Health

The Centre for Community Child Health offers [training and information](http://ww2.rch.org.au/emplibrary/ccch/EY_exp_int_CD.pdf) about how to incorporate inclusive practice as part of everyday operations in its early childhood professional development module “Diversity and Inclusive Practices - Meeting the diverse needs of all children”.

##### Support for children from a culturally and linguistically diverse background from the Department

###### Language services

The Department funds All Graduates to provide interpreter services.

All Graduates provides two types of language services:

* telephone interpreting
* on-site interpreting, both spoken and in sign languages.

Service providers receiving kindergarten funding are eligible to access these services.

All Graduatesis not funded to provide translation of documents.

On request All Graduates will provide eligible service providers with a username and password, to quote when making a booking.

Organisations and parents can phone 1300 200 680 to access telephone interpreting services to

talk about kindergarten programs and a child’s progress, in a variety of languages. Log into the All Graduates website: [www.allgraduates.com.au](http://www.allgraduates.com.au) to book an interpreter, or phone (03) 9605 3000.

###### FKA Children’s Services Inc. (FKA)

The Department funds [FKA Children’s Services](http://www.fka.com.au/) to provide:

* advice and information to teachers and service providers on improving access to kindergarten programs for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability
* casual bilingual workers to assist with the participation of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in kindergarten programs
* training on inclusive practice for early childhood staff working with children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in kindergarten programs
* language assessments for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds attending kindergarten programs
* access to resource sheets and translated information for families.

##### Training and resources for supporting children from a culturally and linguistically diverse background

The [Learning English as an Additional Language in the Early Years (birth to six years) Resource Booklet](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/earlyyears/learning_english_as_additional_lang_1.pdf) developed by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority provides comprehensive information to support early childhood professionals in their work with young children from culturally and linguistically diverse communities in the context of implementing the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework*.

#### Enrolment of children outside the eligible age for kindergarten

Children who turn six during the kindergarten year  
  
Children who turn six at any time during the kindergarten year must be exempted from attending school. Parents should apply for an exemption before the child starts kindergarten by submitting an [*Exemption from school due to attendance in kindergarten program*](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/schadmin/governance/forms/schoolexemption.pdf) form to the appropriate Departmental regional office.   
The service provider must sight the approved exemption form and note that it has been sighted on the child’s enrolment record for later reporting through data collection processes.

Children less than four years of age  
If a child is less than four years of age by 30 April in the year they are to attend a funded kindergarten program, the parents must first request approval for early school entry for their child to attend school in the following year.  
 Requests must be made in writing to the appropriate Departmental regional office in accordance with government school entry processes, or directly to the non-government school that the child will be attending.  
 It is unlikely that the regional office or the non-government school will be able to determine the outcome of the request for early school entry until close to the school commencement date.  
Service providers should advise parents that most applications for early school entry are unsuccessful and children granted early entry to kindergarten are **not eligible** to apply for a another year of funded kindergarten in the following year if the child does not attend school.  
A copy of the written request for early school entry must accompany the child’s application for kindergarten enrolment. The service must sight this request and include a copy in the child’s enrolment record.

### Operational requirements: managing the service

The following table outlines operational requirements for service providers with regard to managing a service.

| **Operational requirement** | **For more information  go to** |
| --- | --- |
| Service providers are expected to operate in accordance with good governance principles. | *Good governance practice* on page 26. |
| Service providers must demonstrate financial viability to the satisfaction of the Department through the Financial Accountability Reporting requirements. | *Financial accountability reporting* on page 26. |
| Service providers are required to have a comprehensive written fees policy. | *Kindergarten fees policy* on page 26. |
| All community-based not-for-profit organisations delivering a funded kindergarten program must use the Department’s contracted payroll service unless they certify they use an equivalent service. | *Payroll service* on page 27. |
| Service providers are required to maintain records relating to, and budget for, staff entitlements, and keep a provisions account for leave entitlements. | *Payroll service* on page 27. |
| Service providers must report any alleged misappropriation of funds to Victoria Police for investigation. | *Misappropriation of funds* on page 28. |
| Service providers not covered under the Community Service Organisations Insurance Program must have comparable insurance coverage. | *Community Service Organisations Insurance Program* on page 28. |
| Service providers must create and submit an emergency management plan to the appropriate Departmental regional office. | *Emergency management* on page 29. |
| Service providers must report to the appropriate Departmental regional office if the service closes due to an emergency. | *Emergency management* on page 29. |

#### Good governance practices

Service providers in receipt of kindergarten funding are expected to operate in accordance with good governance principles.

Governance of private sector organisations is subject to corporate law requirements.

To be operating in accordance with good governance principles, a board of a community service organisation should have in place principles and practices that provide for:

* accountability and conformance, which enable it to assesses if it is performing effectively, efficiently and ethically in the best interests of all stakeholders, and in accordance with the law, regulations, probity, accountability and openness.
* leadership and performance, which guide the service provider in developing a vision, plans, policies and strategies focused on improving outcomes and performance, and helps to build strong and productive partnerships between all of its stakeholders.

In addition, approved education and care services under the *National Quality Framework* are required to meet the governance standards under National Quality Standards, *Quality Area 7 Leadership and service management,* specifically:

* effective leadership that promotes a positive organisational culture and builds a professional learning community
* a commitment to continuous improvement
* administrative systems that enable effective management of a quality service.

The website of [Early Learning Association Australia](http://www.kpv.org.au/) (formerly Kindergarten Parents Victoria, KPV) has resources for committees.

#### Financial accountability reporting

The financial accountability reporting (FAR) requirements for service providers are set out in Clause 8 of the service agreement.

#### Kindergarten fees policy

Service providers receiving kindergarten funding are required to have a comprehensive written fees policy. This should include a written statement about the annual fees to be charged and the payment process.

At the time of enrolment, all families are to be informed of the term dates and annual fees to be charged.

The fees policy must provide information about:

* the total annual fee amount, including all non-refundable components (such as excursions, maintenance costs, etc)
* payment options and procedures (for example, developing a payment plan to allow for low income families)
* action that will be taken if fees are not paid
* any refundable levies (if applicable)
* plans for fundraising (if applicable)
* how parents will be notified of fee changes throughout the year
* any deposits required to secure a place on a waiting list or to accept an offered place (note that refundable deposits should not act as a barrier to enrolment)
* how the kindergarten fee subsidy is applied and arrangements for eligible families to claim the subsidy.

##### Budgeting

When calculating an annual fee to charge families, service providers should set an amount that balances the capacity of parents to pay, the provision of a high-quality service and the overall financial viability of the service.

Service providers should develop an annual budget as an important tool to monitor their financial performance. The Department funds [Early Learning Association Australia](http://www.kpv.org.au/) (formerly Kindergarten Parents Victoria) to provide advice to kindergarten service providers on preparing budgets.

There is no requirement to submit annual budgets to the Department; however, regional staff may ask to examine budget calculations if there are concerns about the viability of a service.

When budgeting, service providers should consider all anticipated expenditure and costs. The difference between income (from government funding and other sources) and anticipated expenditure determines the annual fee, and therefore the fee for each family.

Fees and costs, such as deposit holding fees, and maintenance and excursions, should not be considered as separate add-on costs, but be included as part of the annual kindergarten fee. The only exception to this is refundable levies. However, service providers should ensure that refundable levies do not act as a barrier to participation.

#### Payroll service

It is a condition of funding that all community-based not-for-profit organisations delivering a funded kindergarten program use a payroll service.

##### Kindergarten payroll service

The Department funds a contractor, [ADP Australia/New Zealand](http://www.adppayroll.com.au/), to provide a free payroll service for service providers receiving kindergarten funding that fall into one of the following categories:

* a community-based, not-for-profit incorporated association
* a co-operative operating through a committee of management
* a kindergarten cluster manager that is not a local government.

The payroll service covers early childhood staff and/or ancillary staff who work at a service or who provide administrative, management or professional support from a central office/location.

The payroll contractor provides the following support services:

* calculation and processing of staff salaries and other entitlements
* processing of taxation, superannuation and other contributions as required
* electronic lodgement of employer declaration forms
* payslips and payment summaries
* fortnightly reports of salary expenditure for management bodies
* telephone and email advisory service
* training for committees of management
* advice regarding pay and entitlements.

The payroll service also manages the assessment of entitlements accrued by staff employed in Victorian kindergarten programs prior to 24 January 1994.

Community-based, not-for-profit organisations that do not use the Department’s contracted service must certify that they use an equivalent payroll service by submitting a [*Declaration of an equivalent payroll service for community-based organisations*](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/childrensservices/pd03payrollservice.doc) to the appropriate Departmental regional office.

##### Provisions account

Service providers are required to:

* maintain detailed staff records to ascertain staff entitlements
* keep a provisions account for staff long service leave and sick leave entitlements
* budget for and deposit into the provisions account on an annual basis.

It is important that this money is maintained in a separate account from the service provider’s operational accounts.

#### Misappropriation of funds

Service providers should be aware of their legal responsibilities and obligations under State and Commonwealth legislation. In addition to the Department’s requirements, there are statutory obligations for corporations and incorporated associations particularly in terms of financial management and accountability. For incorporated committees of management, there are legal obligations under the *Associations Incorporations Act 1981*.

To ensure that service providers are not placed in vulnerable situations, the Department requires that any alleged misappropriation of funds be reported to Victoria Police for investigation. If a service provider believes funds have been misappropriated, it has a duty to act on this suspicion. An audit of relevant financial records should be organised and the person suspected of the misappropriation relieved of any financial responsibilities until the matter has been resolved.

Insurance arranged through the Community Service Organisations Insurance Program does not provide coverage for restitution of stolen monies. Service providers should arrange such coverage if required.

#### Community Service Organisations Insurance Program

The [Community Service Organisation (CSO) Insurance Program](http://www.vmia.vic.gov.au/Insurance/Policies-and-Manuals/Community-Service-Organisations-Program.aspx) is managed by the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority (VMIA) and provides coverage for:

* public and products liability
* professional indemnity
* directors’ and officers’ liability
* fidelity guarantee
* medical indemnity
* volunteers' personal accident (injury).

The CSO Insurance Program is available to community service organisations that receive direct funding from any of the following Victorian Government departments:

* Department of Human Services
* Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
* Department of Justice
* Department of Planning and Community Development.

The following service providers are not covered by the CSO Insurance Program and are required to make their own insurance arrangements:

* schools
* local government authorities
* church organisations
* tertiary education institutions
* private for-profit organisations.

However, in cases where funding is transacted through a service agreement with a local government authority, church organisation or tertiary education institution and the funded kindergarten program is delivered by an incorporated association, the incorporated association is covered by the CSO Insurance Program.

Coverage for insured service providers extends to other community service activities provided by the service provider, such as kindergarten or activity groups for three-year-old children or occasional care.

The CSO Insurance Program does not cover unfunded organisations that may share premises with service providers. These organisations are responsible for arranging and paying for their own insurance.

Further details about the CSO Insurance program are available in the [*Service Agreement Information Kit*](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/facs/bdb/fmu/service-agreement) (available on the Funded Agency Channel).

#### Emergency management

Emergency management planIt is a regulatory requirement that all services have an [emergency management plan](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/Pages/emergencies.aspx) (EMP) in place. Service providers should develop plans in consultation with the appropriate Departmental regional office, local community and emergency services, and other relevant stakeholders. This plan should be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect the local needs of the community. The EMP must be submitted to the appropriate Departmental regional office.

Service closure in response to an emergencyIn the event of an emergency, it may be necessary for a service to close to ensure the safety of children and adults.  
When a service closes due to an emergency (either a voluntary or mandatory closure) the service provider must report to the appropriate Departmental regional office:

* how many children have been affected
* how long the service may be closed
* any damage that has been sustained.

The appropriate Departmental regional office must be informed when the service resumes after a closure.   
The service provider should have a closure policy which should be clearly communicated to parents at the beginning of the kindergarten year. The closure policy should contain:

* a risk assessment of the service
* the regulatory obligations of the service provider
* a communication plan and strategies for disseminating information about closure due to imminent risk.

###### Mandatory closure

Some kindergarten services have been identified as being at [high fire risk](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/Pages/bushfires.aspx) and will be directed to close on days declared a Code Red Fire Danger Rating Day. Services have been advised of their inclusion on the [Bushfire At-Risk Register](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/Pages/emergencies.aspx).

Service providers in receipt of funding will experience no financial disadvantage regarding kindergarten funding for mandatory closures. Where services sustain repeated closures, they should contact the appropriate Departmental regional office to discuss their individual financial circumstances and any related viability issues.

###### Voluntary closures

Service providers may also develop policies about voluntary closures.

The voluntary closure policy should include the following points:

* criteria for voluntary closure – what the local triggers are and how the decision will be made
* impact of closure on the capacity to deliver the required hours of service (for example, make-up days)
* financial implications (fees, funding and Child Care Benefit).

A service provider’s voluntary closure policy should be based on local research and discussion with the appropriate Departmental regional office. Generally such closures will not impact on kindergarten funding from the Department.

Services approved for Commonwealth Child Care Benefit (CCB) funding may contact the Commonwealth [Department of Human Services](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/subjects/payments-for-families?utm_id=10) to enquire about emergency CCB or phone 13 61 50 (13 12 02 for languages other than English).

#### Early Learning Association Australia

[Early Learning Association Australia](http://www.kpv.org.au/) (formerly Kindergarten Parents Victoria, KPV) is a peak body representing the interests of parents and early learning providers and an advocate for quality and accessible learning for all children. Early Learning Association Australia provides support and resources relating to governance, management and community participation to promote excellence in early childhood education and care.

Early Learning Association Australia is funded by the Department to assist service providers receiving kindergarten funding to operate in accordance with good governance and sound operation and management principles, with a particular focus on meeting the requirements of the *National Quality Framework*. The support is provided through an advisory service (telephone and email), online and face-to-face training, resource materials, and intensive support to service providers with complex management issues.

#### Kindergarten IT Program

The Department funds the State Library of Victoria to provide [information technology (IT) support](http://www.kindergarten.vic.gov.au/) to kindergarten cluster managers and community-based organisations that operate funded kindergarten programs.

The State Library provides the following range of supports to eligible service providers:

* internet connectivity
* six email addresses per kindergarten
* kindergarten.vic.gov.au domain name renewal and hosting
* help desk support for general computer and software enquiries
* repair of computer hardware where that hardware was provided by the Department through the Kindergarten IT roll-out in 2009
* free community web hosting.

The State Library of Victoria can provide more information about the support provided and how to join the program.

### Operational requirements: managing teachers

The following table outlines operational requirements for service providers with regard to managing early childhood teachers.

| **Operational requirement** | **For more information go to** |
| --- | --- |
| Service providers are required to employ qualified early childhood teachers, holding a qualification that appears on the list of early childhood teaching qualifications approved by the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), who practise in accordance with the Early Childhood Teacher Professional Standards. | <http://acecqa.gov.au/qualifications/approved-early-childhood-teaching-qualifications/>  *Early childhood teacher professional standards* on page 31. |
| Service providers are required to ensure teachers complete professional development each year linked to the teacher’s professional development plan in accordance with applicable employment agreements. | *Professional development* on page 32. |
| Service providers are required to agree to teachers accessing the early childhood teacher validation process in accordance with applicable employment agreements. | *Early childhood teacher validation process* on page 32. |
| Service providers must notify the appropriate Departmental regional office if, on any day of normal program delivery, the usual teacher is absent and another qualified early childhood teacher is not available to deliver the program. | *Change or absence of teacher* on page 32. |
| Service providers must notify the appropriate Departmental regional office as soon as possible if there is a change in the early childhood teacher delivering the program. | *Notifying the region of a change in teacher* on page 33. |

#### Early childhood teacher professional standards

A set of [professional standards](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/childrensservices/ecteachstandards.pdf) apply to early childhood teachers. All service providers in receipt of kindergarten funding are required to incorporate the use of professional standards. The Early Childhood Australia [Code of Ethics](https://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/code_of_ethics/early_childhood_australias_code_of_ethics.html) should also guide practice.

#### Professional development

##### Gowrie Victoria

The Department funds [Gowrie Victoria](http://www.gowrievictoria.org.au/) to provide:

* professional development for rural and metropolitan kindergarten staff
* telephone advice to kindergarten staff and committees of management on quality and practice issues
* access to specialised early childhood library and resources.

##### Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership

The [Bastow Institute](https://www.bastow.vic.edu.au/Pages/Home.aspx) is a Victorian Government initiative offering courses and services designed to build capacity of leaders in early childhood settings

#### Early childhood teacher validation process

All service providers in receipt of kindergarten funding are required to provide teachers with access to the early childhood teacher validation process. The Department has a contract with [Vocational Education and Training Assessment Services](http://www.vetassess.com.au/assess_my_skills/early_childhood_teachers.cfm) (VETASSESS) to manage and administer the validation process for early childhood teachers.

The classification structure for early childhood teachers is specified in Victorian industrial agreements. Refer to the relevant Victorian industrial agreement for details of these classification structures and validation processes.

VETASSESS employs validators to independently assess applications for reclassification.

#### Change or absence of teacher

##### Replacing an early childhood teacher on leave

If an early childhood teacher is absent from the service because of short-term illness or leave (for a period of up to, but not exceeding, 12 weeks), the teacher may be replaced by a primary teacher without loss of kindergarten funding. Services also need to consider any relevant regulatory requirements.

If the early childhood teacher’s absence exceeds 12 weeks, the teacher must be replaced by another early childhood teacher, or in exceptional circumstances, by a primary teacher. Refer to *What to do when you cannot recruit an early childhood teacher* on page 33.

##### Emergency or relief teachers

At certain times during the kindergarten year service providers may find it necessary to employ an emergency or relief teacher to deliver the kindergarten program (for example, when the teacher is ill).

If, on a program delivery day, the service provider is unable to find an early childhood teacher or a primary teacher to relieve on that day, it must notify the appropriate Departmental regional office as to whether it has cancelled the session or engaged a diploma qualified educator to take the session. If a diploma qualified educator is engaged, a sign must be posted to indicate that a teacher will not be running the session and it will not operate as a kindergarten program for that day.

##### What to do when you cannot recruit an early childhood teacher

Services employing teachers who do not hold a qualification that appears on the list of early childhood teaching qualifications approved by the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority, may not be eligible to receive kindergarten funding and should contact the appropriate Departmental regional office before proceeding with employment.

In exceptional circumstances, when a service provider is unable to recruit an early childhood teacher, the service provider may seek to continue to be funded. Service providers unable to recruit an early childhood teacher should contact the appropriate Departmental regional office to discuss their options as outlined in *Appendix: Options for funding in exceptional circumstances* on page [insert #].

##### Notifying the region of a change in teacher

When there is a change in early childhood teacher, the service provider must notify the appropriate Departmental regional office as soon as possible. For teacher absences other than emergency a [*Change in early childhood teacher delivering a funded kindergarten program declaration form*](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/childrensservices/pd04changeofteacher.doc)must be completed and submitted to the appropriate Departmental regional office.

### Operational requirements: providing reports and data

The following table outlines operational requirements for service providers with regard to providing reports and data to the Department.

| **Operational requirement** | **For more information go to** |
| --- | --- |
| Service providers are required to comply with the *Information Privacy Act 2000* and the *Health Records Act 2001*. | *Privacy and information sharing* on page 34. |
| Services must maintain records and data and provide information relevant to funding to the Department on request, for example, information relating to children declared eligible for a second year of funded kindergarten. |  |
| Service providers must provide data to the Department, including child level data, during the April confirmed data collection and August census data collection. | *Complying with the service agreement – data collection* on page page 34  *Timelines – key dates and tasks* on page 78. |
| Service providers must notify the Department when there has been a change at a service that may affect funding, including:   * change in teacher delivering the program * change in enrolment numbers * change in numbers of children eligible for kindergarten fee subsidy. | The [Department](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/careankinder/funding/datacollection.htm)’s website. |

#### Privacy and information sharing

Service providers are required to comply with the [*Information Privacy Act 2000*](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/ipa2000231/) and the [*Health Records Act 2001*](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/hra2001144/)and should be guided by the [Department’s Information Privacy Policy](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/pages/privacypolicy.aspx).

When requesting personal information:

* collect only the information that is needed for the specified purpose
* ensure the person knows why the information is being collected and how it will be used
* use and disclose information only for the purpose for which it is collected, unless otherwise required by law
* store information securely, protecting it from unauthorised access
* retain information for the required period
* provide the person with access to their own information and the right to seek its correction.

Children’s enrolment records should be stored in a secure location that is not accessible to individuals other than authorised staff of the service provider and the Department. The child’s parent is entitled to access this information at any time, upon request.

Service providers are required to request parental consent to the sharing of information between teachers and other professionals working with their children. A [‘Parent/Guardian Consent to Share Information’](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/childrensservices/parentguardianshareinformation.pdf) template is available on the Department’s website. A consent form is included as part of the *Transition Learning and Development Statement* (see page 15) and A Guide to Upholding Privacy Principles is available in the [Transition: A Positive Start to School Resource Kit](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/learning/trkall.pdf).

Services need to be sensitive regarding the collection and sharing of information from families so that privacy concerns do not act as a barrier to their participation in a kindergarten program.

#### Complying with the service agreement – data collection

Service providers receiving kindergarten funding from the Department are required to undertake two mandatory online data collections each year. The data collection processes are undertaken in April and August each year.

The data provided by service providers is important because it enables the Department to:

* calculate appropriate funding entitlements based on the enrolment of children eligible for kindergarten per capita grants and kindergarten fee subsidies (refer to page 36 and 42)
* monitor individual and clustered services
* compile information about programs and facilities, which is sometimes shared with other levels of government for the purpose of planning
* plan new policies, programs and resources to support service delivery
* share service level information with local government authorities to inform the development of Municipal Early Years Plans
* meet the reporting requirements of the National Partnership Agreements.

##### Confirmed kindergarten enrolment data collection

In April each year service providers must complete the online confirmed data collection which collects ‘child level’ data relating to enrolled children, as well as data concerning the service provider, service and teachers. ‘Child level’ data requires that all service providers record details of each child attending the service (including name, address, date of birth).

##### Annual August census data collection

In August each year, service providers are required to complete the census data collection. In this data collection, the child level data originally provided in April is provided back to service providers allowing them to update and to complete a ‘census’ of the attendance of each child in a designated week in August. This data is reported under the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education in a de-identified format. Services should note that the compulsory August data collection is for census purposes and is not used to adjust per capita funding.

##### Information needed for data collection

Certain information is sought from parents at the time of enrolment to ensure that families are aware of, and able to access, services and resources that will support children attending kindergarten. This information should be kept with the child’s enrolment record and referred to when completing the data collection processes. It is crucial that service providers understand and comply with privacy obligations relating to collection and storing of personal information.

It is important that the child’s name, address and date of birth are accurately recorded on the child’s enrolment record, along with other information that may affect the funding the service provider is eligible to receive. Information recorded should include whether the child:

* is living at home with parents and family or is living in out of home care (foster care, permanent care or kinship care)
* has been identified by a parent, guardian or carer as Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
* has a diagnosed disability or developmental delay
* is receiving a second year of funded kindergarten
* is eligible to receive the kindergarten fee subsidy, or Early Start Kindergarten extension grant (include date and source of advice of eligibility)
* received an Early Start Kindergarten grant and has successfully transitioned to kindergarten in the year prior to school
* applied for early or late entry to school.

# A.3 Kindergarten per capita grants

The Department provides kindergarten per capita (per child) grants as a contribution toward the cost of running a kindergarten program.

Eligible service providers receive a grant for each eligible child who is enrolled and attending a funded kindergarten program. The grant rate varies depending on where the service is located, the number of enrolments and the service setting. Service providers are advised about which per capita grant rate will apply to their services as part of the service agreement process.

## Applying for kindergarten per capita grants

### Eligibility

Service providers that meet the eligibility criteria for kindergarten funding can apply for a per capita grant for each child enrolled and attending a kindergarten program provided that:

* **the child is** at least four years old on 30 April of the year in which they are enrolled to attend the funded kindergarten program
* **the child is not** enrolled in a funded kindergarten place at another service.

Satisfactory evidence of a child’s identity and date of birth must be provided by the parent at the time of enrolment. Acceptable documents are:

* a birth certificate or a passport for Australian-born children
* a travel document for non-Australian born children.

The child should be enrolled using the name stated on the identification document. After the child is enrolled, the family name entered on the enrolment record should not be changed without the consent of both parents or by direction of a court order.

### Funding amount

Outlined below are the rates, per child, for service providers offering a kindergarten program of a minimum of 15 hours per week (or 600 hours per kindergarten year) and for those service providers still offering 10.75 hours per week in 2013.

Rates are indexed each year. New rates are communicated annually in supplements to this guide published on the Department’s website.

#### Standard per capita grants

Eligible service providers are funded at the standard per capita grant rate unless another per capita grant type applies (see below).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of kindergarten per capita grant** | **Annual per capita grant rate from**  **1 January 2013** | **Annual per capita grant rate from**  **1 July 2013** |
| **Standard rate** for service providers offering 15 hours per week (600 hours per year) | $3,001  (approx. $250 per month) | $3,091  (approx. $258 per month) |
| **Standard rate** for service providers offering 10.75 hours per week | $2,087  (approx. $174  per month) | $2,150  (approx. $179  per month) |

**In order to be eligible for per capita grants at the standard rate, the service provider** must operate a service with a minimum of 20 enrolments **unless the service is operated** by a kindergarten cluster manager, as part of a long day care (LDC) service, or by a school.

#### Rural per capita grants

Eligible service providers are funded at the rural per capita grant rate if the service they operate meets all of the following criteria:

* the service is located in a rural area as defined by the Department
* the service is not operated by a non-government school
* the service offers the only kindergarten program in a rural town.

The rural per capita grant is paid for a maximum of 45 children. If the service has more than 45 enrolments, the 46th child and above attract the standard per capita grant rate.

If a service meeting all of the above criteria has 14 or fewer enrolments, the service provider is funded at the small rural per capita grant rate.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of kindergarten per capita grant** | **Annual per capita grant rate from**  **1 January 2013** | **Annual per capita grant rate from**  **1 July 2013** |
| **Rural rate** for service providers offering 15 hours per week (600 hours per year) | $3,710  (approx. $309 per month) | $3,821  (approx. $318 per month) |
| **Rural rate** for service providers offer 10.75 hours per week | $2,580  (approx. $215 per month) | $2,657  (approx. $221 per month) |

#### Small rural per capita grants

##### Small rural per capita grants

Eligible service providers are funded at the small rural per capita rate if they:

* meet the criteria for funding at the rural rate and
* operate a service with 1–14 enrolments.

The small rural per capita grant is paid for each eligible child up to 10 children. If the service has 11 – 14 enrolments, the total funding paid is equivalent to the rural per capita grant for 15 children.

Service providers operating small rural services that anticipate enrolments of five children or fewer should contact the appropriate Departmental regional office to discuss sustainable program options.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of kindergarten per capita grant** | **Annual per capita grant rate from**  **1 January 2013** | **Annual per capita grant rate from**  **1 July 2013** |
| **Small rural rate** for service providers offering 15 hours per week (600 hours per year) | $5,474  (approx. $456 per month) | $5,639  (approx. $470 per month) |
| **Small rural rate** for service providers offer 10.75 hours per week | $3,807  (approx. $317 per month) | $3,921  (approx. $327 per month) |

##### Small rural grants initiative

In addition to the small rural per capita grant, the Department provides additional funding to support access to affordable kindergarten programs in small rural communities through the small rural grants initiative.

All service providers receiving per capita grants at the small rural rate are eligible to receive an annual grant through the small rural grants initiative. Service providers do not need to apply for the grant. Eligible service providers are identified through the April confirmed data collection.

The Department uses the enrolment data provided by service providers to identify those service providers eligible for per capita funding at the small rural rate and to determine the number of children enrolled at each service. The small rural grants initiative grant amounts are tiered to reflect the number of enrolments, so that services with fewer enrolments attract a larger payment.

The number of services meeting the criteria for small rural per capita funding and the total number of enrolments across these services will determine the amount of funding that can be allocated to each service provider under the initiative. The maximum amount payable under the small rural grants initiative is $20,000 per year.

Payments are generated by the Department following identification of eligible service providers. Grants are paid as an annual one-off payment, usually in September or October each year.

#### Non-government school per capita grants

Non-government schools are Catholic or Independent schools not conducted by or on behalf of the Victorian Government. The Department provides kindergarten funding at two different per capita grant rates for non-government schools, depending on the school’s previous Economic Resource Index rating. Service providers that are unsure which rate applies can contact the appropriate Departmental regional office.

##### Type one non-government school per capita grants

Eligible service providers are funded at the type one non-government school per capita grant rate if they meet the following criteria:

* the service provider is classified by the Department as a type one non-government school (previously deemed to have an Economic Resource Index rating of 1–4).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of kindergarten per capita grant** | **Annual per capita grant rate from**  **1 January 2013** | **Annual per capita grant rate from**  **1 July 2013** |
| **Type one** **non-government school rate** for service providers offering 15 hours per week (600 hours per year) | $488  (approx. $41 per month) | $503  (approx. $42 per month) |
| **Type one** **non-government school rate** for service providers offering 10.75 hours per week | $350  (approx. $29 per month) | $361  (approx. $30 per month) |

##### Type two non-government school per capita grants

Eligible service providers are funded at the type two non-government school per capita grant rate if they meet the following criteria:

* the service provider is classified by the Department as a type two non-government school (previously deemed to have an Economic Resource Index rating of 5–12).

| **Type of kindergarten per capita grant** | **Annual per capita grant rate from**  **1 January 2013** | **Annual per capita grant rate from**  **1 July 2013** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Type two non-government school rate** for service providers offering 15 hours per week (600 hours per year) | $1,585  (approx. $132 per month) | $1,633  (approx. $136 per month) |
| **Type two non-government school rate** for service providers offering 10.75 hours per week | $1,136  (approx. $95 per month) | $1,170  (approx. $98 per month) |

### How to apply

The following process applies to eligible service providers that:

* have never received kindergarten funding from the Department
* have received kindergarten funding in the past but are not currently in receipt of kindergarten funding
* currently receive kindergarten funding but require funding for an additional service, or
* are approved education and care service providers seeking to commence kindergarten funding following the transfer of a service approval for a service currently operating a funded kindergarten program.

Service providers interested in applying for kindergarten funding should ensure they meet the eligibility criteria and should contact:

* the appropriate Departmental regional office to discuss the proposed application and
* the relevant local council to discuss their service in the context of the Municipal Early Years Plan.

Service providers can apply for new kindergarten funding using the [*New kindergarten funding or re-commencement of funding application*](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/careankinder/funding/datacollection.htm).

Applications for new kindergarten funding should be submitted by 30 September to receive pro rata funding for the current year.

### How funding works

When it is determined that the applicant meets the eligibility requirements, a Departmental regional office will contact the service provider and forward a service agreement for signing (if a service agreement is not already in place).

The Department pays kindergarten per capita funding in advance, in monthly payments, made on the first Tuesday of each month in accordance with the service agreement. When a payment is made, a remittance advice is sent to the service provider indicating the amount paid. When adjustments are made, the regional office will send the service provider a payment history report, which outlines the basis for any adjustments.

The per capita grant is paid at the applicable rate for each eligible child enrolled and attending a service operated by an eligible service provider. Per capita funding can only be accessed at one service at any one time for each child.

New or recommenced funding is backdated to the first day of the month **after** a complete application (that is an application containing all information required to enable a funding decision) is received, and payments generally commence the month **after** funding is approved. Applications for funding for new services received from October onwards will only be funded from the start of the next calendar year.

Where an the application is associated with a transfer of business or the transfer of service approval of service currently offering a funded kindergarten program, funding will be paid from the date the new (and eligible) service provider takes over the operation of the service, provided the complete funding application is received in sufficient time to allow for approval prior to the transfer.

Once a service agreement is in place, a service should follow the adjusting per capita funding process below, to continue receiving the correct amount of per capita funding.

## Adjusting per capita funding

Service providers are required to provide updated information to the Department about the number of enrolled children eligible for per capita funding.

Service providers can update the numbers of eligible children enrolled in their program in three ways:

* the mandatory online confirmed data collection process in April each year
* by submitting funding adjustment forms to the appropriate Departmental regional office outside the data collection windows
* by providing anticipated enrolment numbers to the Department through an optional online November process to advise of a change in enrolments for the next year.

Visit the Department’s website to download the Adjustment to anticipated kindergarten funding application (January–March) and Adjustment to confirmed kindergarten funding application.

The Department is developing a new online web-based system for funding applications, data collection, and reporting. The Kindergarten Information Management System (KIM) will commence operation in 2013.

The confirmed enrolment data provided by service providers in April is used to:

* calculate the funding entitlement for July to December of the same year
* revise the funding entitlement for January to June of the same year
* estimate the funding entitlement for January to June of the following year.

The revised funding entitlement for January to June is compared to what was actually paid to the service provider. There are three possible actions depending on the result:

* If the two amounts are the same, no action is taken.
* If the actual amount paid is less than the revised funding entitlement, a positive prior year adjustment will occur. The positive adjustment, that is the extra funding due to the service provider, will be incorporated into the first payment of the new financial year.
* If the actual amount paid is more than the revised funding entitlement, a negative prior year adjustment will occur. The negative adjustment, that is the overpayment, will be deducted from the first payment of the new financial year. If a single lump sum adjustment is likely to cause financial hardship, a service provider can request that monthly payments are adjusted to recoup the overpayment.

In addition to the mandatory April data collection, service providers can use the optional online November process to notify the Department if they anticipate a significant change to their enrolments in the following year. The enrolment data provided by service providers in the optional November process is used to calculate the funding entitlement for January to June of the following year.

### Vacant funded places

When a child leaves a service after the April confirmed data collection has been completed, the funding allocated for that child remains with the service for the remainder of the calendar year. This is termed a ‘vacant funded place’. A vacant funded place must remain available for a future eligible child.

Per capita funding can only be accessed at one service at any one time for each child, however an eligible child leaving a funded service can access a funded place at another service.

If additional eligible children enrol during the year and the service has no vacant funded places, the service provider may apply for additional kindergarten per capita funding and, if applicable, the kindergarten fee subsidy for these extra enrolments by submitting an [*Adjustment to confirmed kindergarten funding application*](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/careankinder/funding/datacollection.htm) to the appropriate Departmental regional office.

Additional enrolments will not be funded if vacant funded places exist at the service.

If an eligible child commences at a service at any time throughout the year, the service provider will be paid a pro rata kindergarten per capita grant amount from the first day of the month after the child was enrolled in the service. If applicable the kindergarten fee subsidy amount to be paid is calculated from the start of the term in which the child enrolled.

## Ceasing kindergarten funding

When a service can no longer offer a kindergarten program (if, for example, a suitably qualified teacher cannot be engaged to deliver the kindergarten program or the service is no longer financially viable), [a *Notification to cease kindergarten per capita funding*](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/careankinder/funding/datacollection.htm) should be completed and returned to the appropriate Departmental regional office as soon as possible to avoid overpayments that may need to be recouped. In this event, the Kindergarten Program Certificate should also be returned to the appropriate Departmental regional office.

# A.4 Kindergarten supplementary funding

## Kindergarten fee subsidy

The Department provides a kindergarten fee subsidy to promote participation in kindergarten programs and to realise the government’s aim to provide all children with access to a high-quality kindergarten program in the year prior to school.

**The kindergarten fee subsidy enables eligible children to attend a funded kindergarten program free of charge or at minimal cost.**

Kindergarten fee subsidies are paid in addition to per capita grants.

Service providers in receipt of kindergarten fee subsidy are required to:

* promote the kindergarten fee subsidy to eligible families
* provide eligible children with access to a kindergarten program free of charge for at least 15 hours per week or 10.75 hours per week (depending on applicable rate)
* charge eligible families no more than the average hourly rate for that service for additional hours offered by a service (that is, more than 15 or 10.75 hours per week, depending on applicable rate)
* not charge families eligible for the fee subsidy more than they charge non-eligible families
* keep fees affordable for all families
* provide equitable access to, and inclusive programs that do not stigmatise any family.

### Eligibility

A service provider can apply for the kindergarten fee subsidy for a child for whom it receives a per capita grant in any of the following circumstances:

* the child is identified by a parent, carer or legal guardian as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
* the child individually holds, or has a parent or guardian who holds one of the following:
* a Commonwealth Health Care Card
* a Commonwealth Pensioner Concession Card
* a Department of Veterans’ Affairs Gold Card or White Card
  + a Temporary Protection/Humanitarian Visa 447, 451, 785 or a Resolution of Status (RoS) visa, Class CD, subclass 851
  + a Refugee/Special Humanitarian Visa 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212,213, 214, 215, 216, or 217
  + Asylum Seeker Bridging Visa A, B, C, D, E or F
* the child is identified on their birth certificate as being a triplet or quadruplet and the other children on the birth certificate are attending a funded kindergarten program.

Services should sight the relevant concession card, visa, travel document or letter of visa status and record the expiry date if it falls within the current term.

#### Kindergarten fee subsidy in long day care services

Child Care Benefit (CCB) and Child Care Rebate (CCR) are Commonwealth Government subsidies to help cover the cost of child care. A child must attend a child care service approved for CCB in order to be eligible for CCB or CCR.

A child enrolled in a long day care service is **not** eligible for a kindergarten fee subsidy where approved CCB is applied to the fee charged for the time spent in the kindergarten program.

An eligible child may attract a kindergarten fee subsidy if enrolled in a long day care service where fees for the kindergarten program are charged separately and where fees paid for the kindergarten program do not attract approved CCB. In this situation, service providers can apply for kindergarten fee subsidy for eligible families.

### Funding amount

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Type** | **Annual kindergarten fee subsidy from 1 January 2013** |
| **Kindergarten fee subsidy rate** for service providers offering 15 hours per week (600 hours per year) | $1,254  (approx. $314 per term) |
| **Kindergarten fee subsidy rate** for service providers offering 10.75 hours per week | $926  (approx. $232 per term) |

### Applying the fee subsidy

#### Services charging fees less than the kindergarten fee subsidy

Services charging annual fees **less** than the kindergarten fee subsidy amount must offer eligible families a kindergarten program free of charge, regardless of whether the program offers more than the minimum number of hours per week.

In cases where the kindergarten fee subsidy exceeds the program fee, service providers are expected to use surplus funding to:

* assist families receiving fee subsidies by covering other required costs
* improve the quality of service and increase local participation
* promote the inclusion of other eligible families into the program.

***Services charging fees greater than the kindergarten fee subsidy***

Service providers with a fee subsidy surplus per service of more than $5,000 per year are required report how they used these funds in the annual online confirmed data collection in April.

With the exception of non-government schools and alternative services (see below), service providers charging annual fees **greater** than the kindergarten fee subsidy are required to provide eligible families with the first 15 or 10.75 hours per week (depending on the applicable rate) of the program free of charge and charge no more than the average hourly rate (for that service) for the additional hours.

Alternative services, such as those offering kindergarten programs in independent schools, or those offering alternative or specialised kindergarten programs like Montessori or Steiner, will receive the kindergarten fee subsidy for any eligible families to reduce the fees paid. In this case, the fee subsidy must be used to directly discount the fees paid by eligible families. Families choosing to access these services

pay the difference between the annual kindergarten fee subsidy and the applicable annual service fee, where the fee exceeds the fee subsidy rate.

All service providers offering more than 10.75 or 15 hours (depending on the applicable rate) are encouraged to consider providing the entire program to eligible children free of charge.

#### Calculating the fee for families eligible for kindergarten fee subsidy

It is important to understand how to apply the kindergarten fee subsidy correctly.

[A tool](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx) is available on the Department’s website to help service providers calculate how much to charge families eligible for the kindergarten fee subsidy. Some examples are also provided in *Appendix: Kindergarten fee subsidy examples* on page 94.

### How to apply

Before providing information relating to the number of children eligible to receive the kindergarten fee subsidy, service providers should:

* review the criteria on page 42 to determine the number of enrolled children eligible for a kindergarten fee subsidy
* review the criteria on page 11 to ensure that the service provider meets criteria for receiving funding.

Services are required to provide the Department with updated numbers of eligible children in the online April confirmed data collection.

### Adjusting kindergarten fee subsidies

If the number of children eligible for a kindergarten fee subsidy increases or decreases after the confirmed enrolment data has been submitted, service providers can complete an [adjustment form](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderdatacollection.aspx).

Service providers in receipt of funding may also adjust the anticipated number of children eligible for the kindergarten fee subsidy for the next kindergarten year by providing updated information in the optional November anticipated enrolments process.

### How funding works

Service providers are paid the kindergarten fee subsidy for the whole term in which an eligible child enrols and attends, or in which an enrolled child becomes eligible or ineligible. For example, the subsidy will be paid for the whole term if:

* an eligible child enrols after the beginning of a term
* an enrolled child becomes eligible for a kindergarten fee subsidy after the beginning of a term
* the relevant card or visa expires during a term.

Kindergarten fee subsidy payments are included in the service provider’s monthly payments as part of base funding.

## Early Start Kindergarten extension grant

A small number of children who have previously accessed Early Start Kindergarten grants, or were enrolled in an Access to Early Learning program, may not be eligible for kindergarten fee subsidy in the year prior to school. These children are able to access an Early Start Kindergarten extension grant to ensure that they have two years of quality early education and care prior to school.

## Early childhood teacher supplement

The Department provides the early childhood teacher supplement in recognition of the higher cost of employing more experienced teachers. In addition to kindergarten per capita grants, service providers can apply for the early childhood teacher supplement for each eligible teacher.

### Eligibility

Service providers are eligible to apply for the early childhood teacher supplement on an annual basis if they:

* receive kindergarten per capita funding and
* employ a teacher, or teachers, in the funded kindergarten program at or above Level 2.2 of the teacher career structure set out in the Local Government Early Childhood Education Employees’ Agreement (LGECEEA) or the Victorian Early Childhood Teachers and Assistants’ Agreement (VECTAA) (or an equivalent agreement or successor agreement).

The early childhood teacher supplement is not available for services operated by non-government schools.

Service providers may claim a supplement at the Level 2 or a Level 3 rate when a teacher is employed in accordance with the levels described below. That is, the teacher must be classified:

* at Level 2.2, 2.3 or 2.4 under the VECTAA or LGECEEA (or equivalent) for the Level 2 supplement rate
* at Level 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 or 3.4 under the VECTAA or LGECEEA (or equivalent) for the Level 3 supplement rate
* by the validation process as being at the accomplished level, plus have at least one year of experience for the Level 2 supplement rate or
* by the validation process at the exemplary level for the Level 3 supplement rate.

In addition to the above, the employer must also certify that the teacher:

* is paid at no less than the VECTAA or LGECEEA Level 2.2 rate for Level 2 supplement and at no less than the VECTAA or LGECEEA Level 3.1 rate for Level 3 supplement and
* will complete professional development each year linked to the teacher’s professional development plan and agree to the teacher accessing the early childhood teacher validation process in accordance with applicable employment agreements.

### Funding amount

A one-off annual payment is available for each eligible teacher.

The early childhood teacher supplement is calculated as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **the number of children eligible for a kindergarten per capita grant** being  taught by the eligible teacher | X | the appropriate **annual rate** from the table below |

Outlined below are the rates, per child, for service providers offering a kindergarten program of a minimum of 15 hours per week (or 600 hours per kindergarten year) and for those services still offering 10.75 hours per week in 2013.

| **Type of early childhood teacher supplement** | **Annual Level 2 supplement rate from  1 January 2013** | **Annual Level 3 supplement rate from  1 January 2013** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Standard early childhood teacher supplement rate** for service providers offering 15 hours per week (600 hours per year) | $201 | $503 |
| **Standard early childhood teacher supplement rate** for service providers offering 10.75 hours per week | $140 | $350 |
| **Rural early childhood teacher supplement rate** for service providers offering 15 hours per week (600 hours per year) | $250 | $624 |
| **Rural early childhood teacher supplement rate** for service providers offering 10.75 hours per week | $174 | $434 |
| **Small rural early childhood teacher supplement rate** for service providers offering 15 hours per week (600 hours per year) | $365 | $913 |
| **Small rural early childhood teacher supplement rate** for service providers offering 10.75 hours per week | $254 | $635 |

#### Early childhood teacher supplement for team teaching models

Service providers that apply a team teaching model to provide a kindergarten program are able to claim the early childhood teacher supplement based on the following criteria:

* Where only one of the teachers delivering the funded kindergarten program is eligible for the early childhood teacher supplement, i.e. Level 2.2 or above, the service provider can claim the supplement for children taught exclusively by the teacher and proportionally for children taught in a team model by that teacher.
* Where both teachers delivering the funded kindergarten program are eligible for the early childhood teacher supplement, i.e. Level 2.2 or above, the service provider can claim the supplement for children taught exclusively and in a team model by both eligible teachers.

Formulas for calculating the supplement are included on the [*Application for early childhood teacher supplement*](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/careankinder/funding/datacollection.htm).

### How to apply

Before applying, service providers should note they are required to certify the teacher is classified as, and currently paid at no less than, the:

* VECTAA or LGECEEA Level 2.2 rate for Level 2 supplement rate
* VECTAA or LGECEEA Level 3.1 rate for Level 3 supplement rate.

Service providers apply by completing an *Application for early childhood teacher supplement* and submitting it to the appropriate Departmental regional office. Applications for early childhood teacher supplements can be submitted at any time during the calendar year for which payment is sought, however it is recommended that applications be submitted beginning in April. All applications must be submitted by 31 December of the year for which payment is sought as no payments will be made for applications submitted after this date.

### How funding works

The early childhood teacher supplement amount payable to a service provider depends on the number of children eligible for a per capita grant who are taught by the eligible teacher in the funded kindergarten program. This information is verified by the data service providers submit in the April confirmed data collection.

Early childhood teacher supplement payments cannot be processed until after the confirmed enrolment data collected in April has been collated by the Department. For applications received between January and June of the year for which payment is sought, payment processing usually commences in July. For applications received between July and December, payment processing usually commences within one month of receipt of the complete application.

Payments are made to the employer (not the teacher) as a retrospective one-off annual payment for the calendar year.

Early childhood teacher supplement payments are not subject to adjustment throughout the year. This means that once paid, the supplement cannot be adjusted to reflect a change in the number of eligible children being taught or the classification level of the eligible teacher.

## Travel allowance

The Department provides a travel allowance to help services in rural regions attract qualified early childhood teachers.

### Eligibility and funding amount

Service providers are eligible to receive the travel allowance if:

* the teacher or relief teacher delivers a kindergarten program at two or more services and
* one of the services which the teacher travels to or from is funded at the rural or small rural rate.

The travel allowance rate is as per the relevant modern award, paid to a maximum of 20,000 kilometres of approved travel per teacher per year. From 1 January 2013, the rate is $0.74 per kilometre.

### How to apply

Eligible service providers can apply for the travel allowance by submitting [*Application for kindergarten travel allowance for rural locations or application to adjust travel allowance funding*](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/careankinder/funding/datacollection.htm)to the appropriate Departmental regional office.

Where possible, applications should be submitted in November of the calendar year prior to funding so that funding payments can commence from January. Though applications can be accepted at any time during the calendar year for which the travel allowance is required, service providers are strongly encouraged to submit applications by April.

Service providers should request that teachers, including relief staff, maintain a log book of travel to verify travel claims. Log books may be kept by services as documentary evidence.

### How funding works

Travel allowance is:

* applicable to school terms only and calculated on a ‘per kilometre per annum’ basis
* paid on the basis of anticipated travel, that is, the number of kilometres from one kindergarten service (base location) to the second or third kindergarten service. If the service provider approves the teacher to travel from home to the service location to deliver the funded program, and that distance is less than that from the base location, then the shortest distance applies
* paid to the service provider to pass on to the travelling teacher, where the teacher uses their own vehicle for travel; or retained by the service provider to offset the costs of providing a vehicle for the teacher.

The travel allowance is included in the service provider’s monthly payments as part of base funding.

If there is significant change to the travel a teacher is required to undertake during the course of the year (including if a teacher leaves during the year) the service provider should complete another application to reflect the changed information and submit it the appropriate Departmental regional office.

## Parental leave reimbursement

### Eligibility

Service providers that make a parental leave entitlement payment to staff employed to deliver the funded kindergarten program can apply to the Department for reimbursement of the parental leave payment.

Staff and employers are advised to examine the full provisions relating to parental leave in the relevant agreements and awards to check that staff are paid the correct amount and to verify eligibility before applying for reimbursement.

### How to apply

Before applying, service providers must ensure that the period of paid parental leave has been completed, as the payment is a reimbursement of payments already made.

Eligible service providers can apply for parental leave reimbursement by submitting a completed [*Application for parental leave reimbursement*](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/careankinder/funding/datacollection.htm) to the appropriate Departmental regional office.

### How funding works

Parental leave entitlements incorporate maternity, partner and adoption leave. Eligible service providers are reimbursed for **up to** 14 weeks paid maternity and adoption leave and up to one week paid partner leave.

The payment is made to the employer (not the staff member) and is made as a retrospective one-off payment.

### Commonwealth Government paid parental leave scheme

In addition to parental leave reimbursement provided by the Department, the Commonwealth Government also funds the Paid Parental Leave Scheme. Contact [Centrelink](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/information/centrelink-website) for information about the Paid Parental Leave Scheme.

# A.5 Kindergarten cluster management

The Department’s [*Kindergarten Cluster Management Policy Framework*](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/childrensservices/kcmframework.pdf) emphasises the importance of kindergarten cluster management as a key strategy to build a stronger and more responsive and effective kindergarten system across the state.  Partnerships with families, the community and all levels of government, coupled with effective management, form the foundation of kindergarten cluster management in Victoria.

Kindergarten cluster management is designed to:

* reduce the administrative and management burden on kindergarten parent volunteer committees
* strengthen the management, planning and delivery of community-based kindergarten programs
* provide kindergarten staff with professional employment arrangements, including professional development and networking opportunities.

The Department provides kindergarten cluster management funding as a contribution toward the cost of managing and coordinating a cluster of services.

## Responsibilities of cluster managers

Kindergarten cluster managers are responsible for the overall management of a cluster of kindergarten services. The major responsibilities include:

* **the management and employment of staff,** including recruitment, salaries, staff appraisals and professional development, and the provision of pedagogical leadership
* **compliance with regulatory and funding requirements**, including operating as the approved provider for all approved services in the cluster and ensuring compliance with regulatory and funding requirements
* **demonstrating good governance and financial management** of cluster funds, including the development of budgets and regular financial reporting
* **strategically planning for and implementing key government initiatives**, such as the National Quality Standards and access to 15 hours of kindergarten
* **contributing to local early years planning**, such as participating in networks that inform Municipal Early Years Plans and place-based initiatives such as Best Start.

## Applying for kindergarten cluster management funding

### Eligibility

Local councils and community-based, not-for-profit organisations that meet the criteria below are eligible to apply for cluster management funding.

| **Criteria for becoming an approved and funded kindergarten cluster manager** | **For more information go to** |
| --- | --- |
| The service provider has discussed becoming a kindergarten cluster manager with the appropriate Departmental regional office. | *Regional office contacts* on page 5. |
| Except where the applicant is a local government, the service provider has discussed becoming a kindergarten cluster manager with local government. | *Partnership with local government* on page page 6. |
| The service provider is, or will become, the approved provider of the funded services and the employer of the staff delivering the kindergarten program. |  |
| The service provider must demonstrate that it meets the general conditions of eligibility outlined in the kindergarten cluster management specification document and application, including the five key components:   * geographically based clusters * demonstration of robust governance and support infrastructure * participation in local partnerships * provision of professional development opportunities and career pathways for kindergarten staff * fostering a culture of continuous improvement. | [*Application to become a kindergarten cluster management organisation*](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/childrensservices/clustermgtappn.pdf). |
| The service provider must manage a minimum of three rural kindergarten services, or five services in a metropolitan area, that receive kindergarten per capita grants. |  |

### Operational requirements: continuous improvement

The following table outlines operational requirements for service providers in receipt of cluster management funding.

| **Operational requirement** | **For more information go to** |
| --- | --- |
| Service providers in receipt of kindergarten cluster management funding must have in place a service improvement plan in accordance with the policy framework. The service improvement plan must be:   * developed and updated annually and forwarded to the regional office, and * reviewed on a quarterly basis. | Obtain Service Improvement Plan template from the appropriate Departmental regional office  *Regional office contacts* on page 5. |

### How funding works

Kindergarten cluster managers receive an annual grant for each service they manage that offers a funded kindergarten program. The grant is for the management and coordination of services across the cluster.

Kindergarten cluster management funding is additional to the per capita grants that service providers receive for each eligible child attending funded kindergarten programs at services in their cluster.

When a service provider is approved as a kindergarten cluster manager, kindergarten cluster management grant payments are made as part of base funding, paid on a monthly basis in accordance with the service agreement. Grants are subject to price indexation. The start-up and establishment grants are paid as one-off lump sum payments on commencement of funding.

Funding is subject to the kindergarten cluster manager meeting operational requirements, including the requirement to develop and implement an annual service improvement plan, which is reviewed quarterly in conjunction with the appropriate Departmental regional office.

### Funding amount

Kindergarten cluster management funding is determined by the number of kindergarten services offering a funded kindergarten program in the cluster.

The funding amount per service location is:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Kindergarten cluster management annual grant rate from 1 July 2012** | **Kindergarten cluster management annual grant rate from 1 July 2013** |
| $8,060 | $8,221 |

New and existing cluster managers adding new services to the cluster receive a **one-off start-up grant** calculated at 15 per cent of the annual kindergarten cluster management grant. This payment is intended to assist service providers with the cost of integrating the new service into the kindergarten cluster.

New kindergarten cluster managers receive a $5000 **establishment grant** to support the establishment of strong internal governance practices.

### How to apply

Service providers interested in becoming kindergarten cluster managers should determine if they meet the required eligibility criteria by reading information available on the Department’s website and by contacting the appropriate Departmental regional office.

Service providers can apply to become a kindergarten cluster manager by submitting an [*Application to become a kindergarten cluster management organisation*](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/childrensservices/clustermgtappn.pdf)to the appropriate regional office.

The Department is committed to processing applications in a timely manner. However in some cases further information or clarification from the applicant may be requested, which can impact on processing times.

Service providers that do not meet all of the specifications will not be recommended for funding. Unsuccessful applications may be reconsidered, following further development, in consultation with the Department’s regional staff.

All applicants will be advised in writing of the outcome of their application.

## Adding an additional kindergarten service to a cluster

Approved kindergarten cluster managers can apply to the Department to add new services to the cluster at any time.

### Criteria for adding a service to an approved kindergarten cluster

| **Criteria for adding a new service to an existing kindergarten cluster** | **For more information go to** |
| --- | --- |
| The service provider has discussed becoming the approved provider for a new service location:  with the appropriate Departmental regional office  and  with the local government, particularly where the service operates from a council-owned building. | *Regional office contacts* on page 5. |
| The service provider already operates services within the local government area (LGA)  or  the service provider has discussed and has approval from the local council of their intention to operate services within the LGA and how they can be included in the local Municipal Early Years Plan. | *Municipal Early Years Plans* on page 6. |

### How to apply to add a service

A kindergarten cluster manager can apply to take on additional kindergarten services at any time. Committees of management of services interested in joining a cluster should contact the appropriate Departmental regional office to find out about local kindergarten clusters operating in their area.

Applications for kindergarten cluster management funding for an additional service are prepared by the kindergarten cluster manager in collaboration with the committee of management of the service provider currently operating the service.

There are several steps involved in transferring a kindergarten service to a cluster:

* The kindergarten cluster manager submits an *Application to add an additional location* to the appropriate Departmental regional office, which may take 4-6 weeks to be processed. The Committee of Management currently operating the service must sign the form agreeing to transfer management and its per capita funding to the cluster manager.
* Upon notification that the application has been approved, the kindergarten cluster manager submits [*Notification of Transfer of Service Approval*](http://acecqa.gov.au/storage/1-SA04_NotificationOfTransferOfServiceApproval-CBC_v4.pdf)to the Quality Assessment and Regulation Division, DEECD. There may be circumstances that fall outside of these guidelines. In this instance, please contact the appropriate Departmental regional office for further advice.

In accordance with the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*, the transferring approved provider and the receiving approved provider must jointly notify the Regulatory Authority of the transfer at least 42 days before the transfer is intended to take effect.

### How funding works once a service has been added

Kindergarten cluster management funding will commence after the steps above have been completed, but will be backdated to the date the application was approved.

Per capita funding for the additional service will transition to the kindergarten cluster manager once the *Application to add an additional location* has been approved and the kindergarten cluster manager has provided evidence to the appropriate Departmental regional office that they have submitted the *Notification of Transfer of Service Approval.*

Funding will be processed in line with the monthly payment cycle to the cluster manager and the service agreement will be updated with details of the additional service.

## Changes to a cluster managed service

If a service ceases to be part of a kindergarten cluster management arrangement, and transfers to another service provider, the cluster manager will receive pro rata, per capita grant payments and cluster management grant payments calculated up to the date on which it no longer operated the service.

If a service ceases to offer a funded kindergarten program, the kindergarten cluster manager must complete a [*Notification to cease kindergarten per capita funding*](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/careankinder/funding/datacollection.htm) and submit it to the appropriate Departmental regional office, and must notify the local council, particularly if the service was operated from a council-owned facility.

The kindergarten cluster manager may continue to receive cluster management payments for that location, following negotiation and approval of arrangements with the appropriate Departmental regional office. Kindergarten cluster management funding may continue provided:

* the kindergarten cluster manager continues to be the approved provider of the service
* continued funding is in the best interest of the local community
* there is a business plan available that outlines the approach to supporting the service to become operational in the next three years. Grants may be withdrawn if the service does not recommence within three years.

**The Kindergarten Guide 2013**

**Part B:** Guidelines for a **second year of kindergarten**

# B.1 A second year of funded kindergarten

The Department provides funding to support children to access a kindergarten program in the year before they start school.

During the kindergarten year, the early childhood teacher and the child’s parent will work together to plan for the child’s transition to school. This will involve open and honest communication about the child’s learning and development and strategies to facilitate a smooth transition.

Where a child is observed to display delays in key outcome areas of learning and development, the possibility of a second year of funded kindergarten may be considered. However, a second year should only be considered if kindergarten will be the most appropriate environment to address the child’s delays in development, that is, the child will achieve better outcomes at kindergarten than if they go to school. Children develop at different rates and some children may develop at a slower rate than others.

From the time of enrolment, regular communication between the parent and the early childhood teacher in relation to a child’s learning and development is very important. If a parent and/or early childhood teacher observes that a child’s learning and development is not progressing at a rate similar to their peers, strategies can be planned and implemented to support the child’s learning and development in those specific areas.

When considering whether a second year of funded kindergarten will benefit a child, the early childhood teacher and parent must ensure that the child meets the eligibility criteria for a second year.

## Choosing the best time to start kindergarten and school

It is important that children are ready to transition to school and that schools are ready to meet the needs of individual children. Therefore, it is crucial that from the time the child is eligible to enrol for kindergarten, the early childhood teacher communicates to parents about the importance of carefully considering the best time for their child to start school, as this will help to determine the best time to start kindergarten.

## Determining eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten

The early childhood teacher is responsible for determining a child’s eligibility to receive a second year of funded kindergarten.

Once an assessment of the child is undertaken and a *Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten* is completed and sent to the appropriate Departmental regional office, the child is eligible to attend a second year of funded kindergarten.

It is important that teachers ensure the plans and forms are completed accurately as they may be subject to annual audit processes undertaken by the Department.

Information about the processes and forms to be completed is available in Part B, Section Two. For further information about the audit process, service providers should contact the appropriate Departmental regional office.

## Eligibility criteria

The early childhood teacher can declare that a child is eligible to receive a second year of funded kindergarten if:

* the child is observed as having delays in at least two outcome areas of learning and development detailed in the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* and
* there is evidence to suggest that the child will achieve better outcomes if he/she attends a second year of kindergarten to strengthen the learning and development of skills in these areas and better facilitate transition to school the following year.

Children who have been granted early entry to kindergarten (ie. children who are less than four years of age by 30 April in the year they attend a funded kindergarten program) are **not eligible** to apply for a second year of funded kindergarten.

# B.2 Process

## Assessing against outcomes

To declare that a child is eligible to receive a second year of funded kindergarten, the early childhood teacher must have observed a delay in at least two of the following five outcomes areas as identified in the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* (see *What is kindergarten?* on page 2:

* identity (emotional development)
* community (social development)
* wellbeing (self care)
* learning (cognitive development)
* communication (receptive/expressive language).

This delay can be identified when comparing the average rate of learning and development for children of the same age and may include, but is not restricted to, children with a diagnosed developmental delay or disability. Other factors such as the child’s family situation, illness or social demographics may also impact on a child’s learning and development.

To determine that a child is eligible to access a second year of kindergarten, the early childhood teacher must undertake the following in consultation with the child’s parent:

* develop a *Term three plan for learning and development*
* review the *Term three plan* and discuss the child’s level of learning and development
* complete the *Second Year Discussion*
* complete the *Assessment summary and declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten* form
* complete the *Second Year Statement* as the child transitions into a second year of funded kindergarten.

The *Assessment summary and declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten* form must be submitted to the Department in order to advise the Department that a child is eligible for a second year of funded kindergarten. The *Term three plan*, *Second Year Discussion* and *Second Year Statement* documents should not be submitted to the Department, but kept on the child’s enrolment record.

## Term three plan for learning and development

Children should be given the best chance of starting school with their peers in the following year.

Delays in development are likely to emerge or become apparent in the first half of the kindergarten year. The early childhood teacher and the child’s parent should discuss the child’s learning and development and set some goals and strategies for the child to meet by the end of term three.

The aim of the *Term three plan* is to access the child’s learning and development against the five outcomes of the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* and to develop goals and strategies to build the child’s skills in key areas.

The plan should be developed during term two, for implementation in term three, and be evaluated towards the end of term three to assess the child’s progress.

The plan should aim to build the child’s skills and development in key outcome areas to support the child’s attendance at school in the following year.

At the end of term three, if the early childhood teacher and the child’s parent agree that the child’s developmental trajectory is on course, it may be decided that the child would benefit most by going to school.

However, if the child is observed to demonstrate delays in learning and development against key outcomes outlined in the plan, the early childhood teacher should undertake the *Second Year Discussion* with the child’s parent.

To support planning for the child and any decisions about a second year of kindergarten or transition to school, it is recommended that other professionals including the Preschool Field Officer (PSFO), the child’s [Maternal and Child Health nurse](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/mch/Pages/default.aspx), or family doctor contribute information and advice about the child’s level of learning and development.

## Second Year Discussion

If the *Term three plan* goals have not been achieved, the early childhood teacher should lead a discussion with the parent to determine whether a second year of kindergarten or transition to school will achieve better outcomes for the child.

A series of questions are provided in the *Second Year Discussion* template to guide this discussion.

The questions include considerations about what support the child needs to achieve outcomes and whether these are more likely to be achieved by attending school or attending a second year of kindergarten.

A review of the *Term three plan for learning and development*, along with the answers provided to these questions, should inform the decision about whether the child should transition to school or attend a second year of kindergarten.

If the early childhood teacher and the child’s parent agree that a second year of funded kindergarten will ensure better outcomes for the child, the early childhood teacher should complete a *Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten.*

## Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten

The child’s early childhood teacher will complete a[*Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten*](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderdatacollection.aspx)on behalf of the eligible child with the consent of the child’s parent.

The *Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten* advises the Department that a child is eligible for a second year of funded kindergarten and provides the child’s parent with written confirmation of eligibility. The *Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten* can also be used when the child is re-enrolling at a service as evidence that they are eligible for a funded kindergarten place.

The *Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten* should be completed and submitted to the appropriate Departmental regional office by the last week of term three.

Declarations made after this date may make it difficult for re-enrolment at the funded service, as the service provider may have allocated all available places to new enrolments in accordance with its enrolment policy and timetable.

A copy of the completed *Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten form* must be kept with the child’s enrolment record at the service and a copy should also be given to the child’s parent.

## Second Year Statement

Services offering a funded kindergarten program are required to provide a *Transition Learning and Development Statement* for each child as they transition to school. The statement provides valuable information for the parent about their child’s learning and development in the early years, and for schools—particularly prep teachers, to help them:

* build relationships with the child and family
* identify the child’s strengths, interests and abilities
* understand how the child can best be supported as they transition into school
* plan appropriate learning programs that meet their individual needs.

Similarly, for those children declared eligible for a second year of funded kindergarten, a *Second Year Statement* documents similar information for the child’s transition into a second year of kindergarten. This is particularly important when a child is enrolled to attend a second year of kindergarten with a different teacher at the same service or at another service.

It is important that all children who have attended a funded kindergarten year are supported through to the next learning environment whether it is school or kindergarten.

The information in the *Second Year Statement* aligns with the *Transition Learning and Development Statement*. If the parent subsequently decides to send their child to school, the information can easily be transferred from one statement to the other.

## Privacy and information sharing

Unless required by law, information can only be released to third parties with the written consent of the parent. A [‘Parent/Guardian Consent to Share Information’](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/childrensservices/parentguardianshareinformation.pdf) template is available on the Department’s website.

The Department will establish a register of service providers that have declared children eligible for a second year of funded kindergarten. Copies of submitted *Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten* retained at Departmental offices are stored securely to protect unauthorised access and the information will only be retained for the period required by the *Public Records Act 1973*.

Some information that does not identify individual children is used to:

* analyse and report on trends in second year participation
* analyse and improve the process for determining eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten.

## Timelines and tasks

This is an indicative timeline to guide early childhood teachers in determining if a child is eligible for a second year of funded kindergarten, and identifies the processes and documents that need to be completed.

Documents referred to in the task column are available in *Appendix: Templates for the second year of funded kindergarten process* on page 95.

| **Timeline** | **Task** |
| --- | --- |
| *During term one & term two* | As part of the regular assessment processes, identify children with an observed delay in learning and development who may benefit from a second year of funded kindergarten, using the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* outcomes. |
| *End of term two* | In collaboration with the child’s parent, develop a *Term three plan for learning and development* which identifies strategies that focus on the developmental outcome areas where a delay has been identified and will be implemented in term three. |
| *Towards the end of term three* | Review the *Term three plan for learning and development.*  Discuss the child’s level of learning and development with the parent and use the *Second Year Discussion* questions to guide your conversation. |
| *End of term three* | If the early childhood teacher and the child’s parent have undertaken the planning and discussion process detailed above, and agree that a second year of funded kindergarten will be the most appropriate environment to address the child’s learning and development delay, and better outcomes will be achieved at kindergarten than if they go to school:   * complete an *Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten* * provide a copy of the *Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten* to parents and retain a copy at the child’s enrolment record * send the original *Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten*  to the appropriate Departmental regional office * ensure the child is re-enrolled for funded kindergarten in the following year * retain (on the child’s enrolment record) the *Term three plan for learning and development*, *Second Year Discussion*, and a copy of the *Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten*. |
| *Term four & beyond* | Complete the *Second Year Statement* for children as they transition into a second year of funded kindergarten.  If the parent subsequently decides to send the child to school, transfer the information from the *Second Year Statement* to the *Transition Learning and Development Statement*. |

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# B.3 Further information

The following resources provide information relating to transition to kindergarten and transition to school. Some of this information relates to children with a diagnosed disability or developmental delay.

## Transition: A Positive Start to School Resource Kit

This kit is designed to help early childhood professionals and school educators develop a better understanding of the positive evidence on transition to primary school and improve the development and planning of local transition-to-school programs. This includes information about completing the *Transition Learning and Development Statement*. Part two of the kit provides specific information relating to children and families that may require additional transition support.

## Sharing Our Journey: the transition from kindergarten to school

*Sharing Our Journey* is an enhanced process supporting the [transition to school](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/learning/Pages/transition.aspx) for children with severe disabilities in receipt of a Kindergarten Inclusion Support package. It links with the *Transition: a Positive Start to School* processand comprises:

* a [protocol](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/healthwellbeing/sharingourjourneyprotocol.pdf) for early childhood services, early intervention services, preschool field officers, and schools to assist in implementing a plan to support transition for these children and families;
* [a kit](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/healthwellbeing/sharingourjourneykit.pdf) for parents including information sheets, *Transition Learning and Development Statements* and an actions planner to support the child’s move from kindergarten to school.

**The Kindergarten Guide 2013**

**Part C:** Guidelines for **Early Start Kindergarten**

# C.1 Early Start Kindergarten funding

The Department provides a range of funding mechanisms to promote the participation of all eligible children in high-quality, professionally-managed kindergarten programs delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher in the year before school.

Research shows that for vulnerable children, earlier enrolment in quality education and care improves outcomes. In recognition of this, the Department provides targeted funding for some children to attend a kindergarten program for the two years before school, with the aim of improving access and diminishing barriers to participation for vulnerable children and Aboriginal children (whom research shows are underrepresented in kindergarten).

## Early Start Kindergarten grants

Two types of Early Start Kindergarten grants enable eligible children to access a kindergarten program for up to 15 hours per week (or 600 hours per year) delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher, in the year two years before school:

* the **Aboriginal Early Start Kindergarten grant** for children identified as being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander by a parent and
* the **Early Start Kindergarten grant** for children known to Child Protection or referred to Child and family services information, referral and support teams (Child FIRST).

## Early Start Kindergarten extension grant

The **Early Start Kindergarten extension grant** is for children who accessed an Early Start Kindergarten grant in the year two years before school, and are ineligible for the kindergarten fee subsidy when attending kindergarten in the year before school. The extension grant is paid in addition to the kindergarten per capita grant and enables an eligible child to attend a funded kindergarten program free of charge or at minimal cost in the year before school.

## Relevant policy

Section One of Part A on page 2 contains information about policy relevant to the kindergarten system in Victoria in general, such as the *National Quality Framework*, the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* and the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education. Section One also contains information about policy with particular relevance in relation to Early Start Kindergarten funding: the National Partnership Agreement for Indigenous Early Childhood Development, the *Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework,* the Wannik education strategy and the Protecting Victoria’s Vulnerable Children Inquiry.

### Access to Early Learning

In 2011, the Department began trialling Access to Early Learning*,* a targeted service model that aims to build the capacity of education and care services to meet the needs of vulnerable children, to work more effectively with families, and to work more collaboratively with the broader child and family service system.

The model focuses on the engagement in quality education and care of three-year-old children known to Child Protection (that is, children who are known to Child Protection or referred to Child FIRST), and children whose family is receiving an enhanced Maternal Child Health Service. The model is designed to provide additional support for vulnerable children and families in order to overcome complex barriers to participation in early childhood education and care.

The model contains functions designed to support the child, the family and the education and care service, including:

* a key facilitation worker – who addresses practical or administrative barriers
* a family support worker – who provides additional family support services to enable participation in kindergarten
* professional and practice development – for educators to assist them in meeting the needs of children
* brokerage funding – to support participation through additional funding support.

# C.2 Early Start Kindergarten grants

## Eligibility criteria for service providers

Early Start Kindergarten grants are available for eligible children attending a three-year-old kindergarten program, a mixed age program or a four-year-old kindergarten program.

Unlike other types of kindergarten funding from the Department (see the Part A on page [insert #] for information about the full range of funding), service providers do not need to be in receipt of kindergarten per capita grants in order to receive Early Start Kindergarten grants for eligible children.

Please note that regulatory requirements are not detailed in the *Kindergarten Guide* and service providers are responsible for understanding and complying with regulatory requirements.

A service is eligible to apply for an Early Start Kindergarten grant for an eligible child if the service meets all of the following criteria:

| **Core eligibility criteria for applying for Early Start Kindergarten grants** | **For more information go to** |
| --- | --- |
| The service provider must be:  an approved education and care service operated by an approved provider under the *National Quality Framework*  or  a Victorian Children’s Service holding a standard licence under the Victorian *Children’s Services Act 1996* (Victorian Act) and *Children’s Services Regulations 2009* (Victorian Regulations). | <http://acecqa.gov.au/resources-and-templates/national-quality-framework-resource-kits/>  or  <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/educareservices/vcs/default.htm> |
| The service provider must have an Australian Business Number (ABN). | [www.business.gov.au](http://www.business.gov.au) |
| The education and care service or Victorian Children’s Service from which the kindergarten program is offered must be located in Victoria. |  |
| The kindergarten program must be delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher, holding a qualification that appears on the list of early childhood teaching qualifications approved by the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). | <http://acecqa.gov.au/qualifications/approved-early-childhood-teaching-qualifications/> |
| The service provider must sign and comply with a DEECD service agreement and operate in accordance with the standards and guidelines detailed in the agreement. | *The service agreement* on page 13. |

### The service agreement

In order to receive kindergarten funding from the Department, service providers are required to sign and comply with a service agreement.

The service agreement sets out:

* how much funding the Department agrees to make available to service providers and what the service provider agrees to provide for this funding
* the terms and conditions that service providers must comply with in using and accounting for the funding.

The agreement covers a set period of time, most commonly three years.

Service providers can obtain a copy of their current service agreement from the [Funded Agency Channel (FAC)](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/funded-agency-channel). Contact the eBusiness administrator on 1300 799 470 or email [ebiz@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:ebiz@dhs.vic.gov.au) to register for the FAC.

All service providers can register to access specific information about their funding, including their service agreement and payment information. Staff members of a service provider or members of the board or committee of the service can apply to become registered users.

## Operational requirements and best practice for service providers

The following table outlines operational requirements for service providers in receipt of Early Start Kindergarten grants.

| **Operational or best practice requirement** | **For more information  go to** |
| --- | --- |
| Service providers in receipt of an Early Start Kindergarten grant are required to offer, free of charge, up to 15 hours per week in a kindergarten program delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher to each eligible child. | *Fees* on page 70. |
| Service providers are required to comply with the *Information Privacy Act 2000* and the *Health Records Act 2001*. | *Privacy and information sharing* on page 70. |
| Service providers must ensure services maintain enrolment records and provide information to the Department on request. | *Enrolment records for children receiving Early Start Kindergarten grants* on page 71. |
| Service providers not covered under the Community Service Organisation Insurance Program must have comparable insurance coverage. | *Community Service Organisations Insurance Program* on page 71. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Service providers and services must operate in accordance with the *Protecting the Safety and Wellbeing of Children and Young People* protocol. | *Protecting the Safety and Wellbeing of Children and Young People* on page 71. |
| Service providers must notify the appropriate Departmental regional office as soon as possible using the appropriate form if there is a change in the early childhood teacher delivering the program. | *Notifying the region of a change in teacher* on page 71. |
| Service providers must provide written confirmation to parents that their child is receiving a funded kindergarten program, including information about the times at which the program is provided. |  |
| Service providers should promote access to kindergarten programs for eligible children, including those who face barriers to participation. | *Supporting children* on page 72. |

### Fees

Service providers must provide families eligible for Early Start Kindergarten funding with up to 15 hours in a kindergarten program free of change, and are strongly encouraged to waive any refundable deposit required upon confirming acceptance/waiting list entry.

It is important that a requirement for a deposit does not present a financial barrier to families seeking to access Early Start Kindergarten funding.

### Privacy and information sharing

Service providers in receipt of Early Start Kindergarten funding are required to comply with the *Information Privacy Act 2000,* the *Health Records Act 2001*, and should be guided by the Department’s Information Privacy Policy. Service providers should go to page 34 for information about their privacy and information sharing obligations.

In particular, where families are accessing additional support services, it is essential to ensure that a coordinated, confidential and sensitive approach is undertaken while working in partnership with families and professionals to strengthen the capacity of the family to support their children.

Early Start Kindergarten data should be reported in an aggregated and de-identified manner in committee meetings and service reports in order to uphold privacy principles.

Services need to be sensitive regarding the collection and sharing of information from families so that privacy concerns do not act as a barrier to their participation in a kindergarten program.

### Enrolment records for children receiving Early Start Kindergarten grants

The following information relating to children in receipt of Early Start Kindergarten grants needs to be recorded in enrolment records and provided to the Department on request:

* the child’s name, address and date of birth
* if a child is living at home with parents and family or is living in out-of-home care (foster care or permanent care or kinship care)
* if the child has been identified by a parent, guardian or carer as an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
* if the child is known to Child Protection or Child FIRST
* if the child’s parents have given permission to share information from Key Ages visits and Maternal and Child Health Service consultations.

### Community Service Organisations Insurance Program

Service providers in receipt of Early Start Kindergarten grants should consult *Community Service Organisations Insurance Program* on page [insert #] of the Part A if they are unsure whether they are covered by the CSO Insurance program. Service providers not covered by the CSO Insurance Program must have comparable insurance coverage.

### Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people

Service providers and services must operate in accordance with the *Protecting the Safety and Wellbeing of Children and Young People* protocol. This joint protocol details current policy and practice to promote and support the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in Victoria.

The protocol provides information for education and care services and Victorian schools to take appropriate action when it is believed that a child has suffered harm, or is likely to suffer harm, through abuse or neglect.

The Department has developed [training packages](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/protectionprotocol.aspx), which can be used to assist early childhood teachers and service providers in understanding their role in implementing the protocol.

### Notifying the region of a change in teacher

When there is a change in early childhood teacher, the service provider must notify the appropriate Departmental regional office as soon as possible.

### Supporting children

Three-year-old children eligible for Early Start Kindergarten grants are entitled to the same support as children eligible to attend a funded kindergarten program in the year before school.

Service providers in receipt of Early Start Kindergarten funding should review *Supporting children* on page 20 of Part Awhich details the resources, services and funding available to support all children, including:

* Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children
* vulnerable children
* children with additional needs, and
* children from a culturally and linguistically diverse background.

#### Communication materials

Communication materials aimed at families and professionals working with eligible children have been developed to provide information about Early Start Kindergarten funding.

Services can use these resources to support the engagement of families and professionals in taking up this important opportunity:

* [Aboriginal Early Start Kindergarten](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/childrensservices/aboriginalearlystartkinder.pdf)
* [Early Start Kindergarten](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/childrensservices/whatisearlystartkinder.pdf) for children whose family has received support from Child Protection or been referred to Child FIRST

## Aboriginal Early Start Kindergarten grant

### Eligibility

A service provider that meets the eligibility criteria for Early Start Kindergarten grants on page 68 is eligible to apply for the Aboriginal Early Start Kindergarten grant for each child who meets **all** of the following criteria:

* the child is at least three years old on or before 30 April in the year in which they are enrolled to attend the funded kindergarten program
* the child has been identified by a parent, carer or legal guardian as being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

Advice of eligibility may be verbal (from a parent or carer) or written from a professional such as a Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESO). Contact the KESO in the appropriate Departmental regional office if you need help determining whether the child is eligible.

A confidential record of the child’s eligibility should be documented and maintained in the child’s enrolment records.

## Early Start Kindergarten grant

### Eligibility

A service provider that meets the eligibility criteria for Early Start Kindergarten grants on page 68 is eligible to apply for the Early Start Kindergarten grant for each child who meets **all** of the following criteria:

* the child is at least three years old on or before 30 April in the year in which they are enrolled to attend the funded kindergarten program
* the child is known to Child Protection.

A child known to Child Protection means:

* a child who has a current, or a history of, involvement with Child Protection or
* a child who has been referred by Child Protection to Child FIRST.

A child’s eligibility can be advised by:

* a parent or carer who self-identify their child as being currently supported by Child Protection or Child FIRST services or having been supported in the past
* a Child Protection or Child FIRST professional.

Advice about eligibility may be verbal (from a parent or carer) or written from a Child Protection or Child FIRST professional. A confidential record of the child’s eligibility should documented and maintained in the child’s enrolment records.

## Funding amount

There are three Early Start Kindergarten grant rates. These are aligned with the kindergarten per capita grant rate that a service provider receives for children enrolled in a kindergarten program in the year prior to school.

Service providers that are unsure whether a standard, rural, or small rural grant rate applies should consult the appropriate Departmental regional office.

The following table contains full grant rates which are paid only when services offer eligible children a minimum of 15 hours per week (or 600 hours per year) of kindergarten program, and are paid on a pro rata basis for services offering fewer hours.

| **Type of Early Start Kindergarten grant** | **Grant rate**  **from 1 January 2013** | **Grant rate**  **from 1 January 2014** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Standard** Early Start Kindergarten grant rate | $4,255 | $4345 |
| **Rural** Early Start Kindergarten grant rate | $4,964 | $5,075 |
| **Small rural** Early Start Kindergarten grant rate | $6,728 | $6,893 |

### Services providing fewer than 15 hours per week

Service providers are paid the Early Start Kindergarten grants at the full rate for services that offer eligible children 15 hours per week (or 600 hours per year) in a kindergarten program. However, in some areas of low supply, services may offer a program of fewer than 15 hours per week to families eligible for Early Start Kindergarten grants. In such cases, grants are paid on a pro rata basis (for example, a service offering an eligible child seven hours per week in a kindergarten program will receive 7/15ths of the applicable full grant rate).

## How to apply

Service providers that do not have a service agreement with the Department in place should contact the appropriate Departmental regional office to discuss their eligibility and to set up a service agreement before submitting an *Application for Early Start Kindergarten funding.*

After a service agreement is signed, or if a service agreement is already in place, service providers can apply for Early Start Kindergarten grants by submitting an [*Application for Early Start Kindergarten funding*](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/careankinder/funding/datacollection.htm)to the appropriate Departmental regional office. Service providers submit a formfor each eligible child, which should be completed in consultation with, and on behalf of, the family.

Service providers can apply for Early Start Kindergarten funding at any time during the year. However, it is strongly encouraged that applications are submitted prior to the end of term one.

## How funding works

Following the completion of the application and approval process, Early Start Kindergarten grants are paid directly to service providers as an annual one off-payment in accordance with the service agreement.

Early Start Kindergarten grants are paid to eligible service providers for each eligible child enrolled at a service as a one-off annual payment, regardless of the child’s enrolment date.

# C.3 Early Start Kindergarten extension grants

## Eligibility criteria and operational requirements for service providers

In order to receive the Early Start Kindergarten extension grant for an eligible child, a service provider must be in receipt of kindergarten per capita grants, and meet the applicable criteria and operational requirements detailed in Part A on page 11.

Service providers should ensure they understand the operational requirements and resources available to support inclusion of all children in kindergarten programs, including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children or vulnerable children who may face barriers to participation.

## Early Start Kindergarten extension grant

The Early Start Kindergarten program is designed to maximise access to two years of quality early education and care prior to school for vulnerable children and children identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. It is intended that children accessing Early Start Kindergarten receive a free or low cost program in both years.

A small number of children who have previously accessed Early Start Kindergarten grants may not be eligible for kindergarten fee subsidy in the year prior to school, because they do not hold a health care card or they are enrolled in a kindergarten program integrated within long day care. As a result, the cost of fees may act as a barrier to participation in a kindergarten program in the year prior to school. In this circumstance, children are eligible for an Early Start Kindergarten extension grant to ensure that they have access to two years of high-quality early education and care prior to school.

For families eligible for Early Start Kindergarten funding, service providers are strongly encouraged to waive any advance payment required upon confirming acceptance/waiting list entry. It is important that a requirement for an advance payment does not present a financial barrier to families seeking to access kindergarten.

### Eligibility

A service provider that is eligible for, and in receipt of, kindergarten per capita grants is eligible to apply for the Early Start Kindergarten extension grant for each child who meets all of the following criteria:

* the child is at least four years old on or before 30 April in the year in which they are enrolled to attend the funded kindergarten program
* the child has previously accessed an Early Start Kindergarten grant or has attended an Access to Early Learning service
* the child is ineligible for the kindergarten fee subsidy.

Where children have accessed Early Start Kindergarten at another service, the following people may advise of the child’s eligibility:

* the child’s parent/guardian or carer
* a Child Protection professional
* a Child FIRST professional
* a Koorie Engagement Support Officer.

Service providers are required to document the date and source of advice of eligibility in the child’s enrolment records.

### Funding amount

| **Type of grant** | **Grant rate**  **from 1 January 2013** |
| --- | --- |
| **Early Start Kindergarten extension grant rate** for service providers offering 15 hours per week (600 hours per year) | $1,254 |
| **Early Start Kindergarten extension grant rate** for service providers offering 10.75 hours per week | $926 |

### How to apply

A service provider must have a service agreement with the Department in place and must be in receipt of a kindergarten per capita grant before submitting an application for an Early Start Kindergarten extension grant for an eligible child.

To apply for an Early Start Kindergarten extension grant, service providers can complete an [*Application for Early Start Kindergarten Funding*](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/careankinder/funding/datacollection.htm) for each eligible child in consultation with, and on behalf of, the family, and submit it to the appropriate Departmental regional office.

Service providers can apply for Early Start Kindergarten extension grants at any time during the year. However, service providers are strongly encouraged to submit applications prior to the end of term one.

### How funding works

Following the completion of the application and approval process, Early Start Kindergarten extension grants are paid directly to service providers as an annual one off-payment in accordance with the service agreement.

Early Start Kindergarten extension grants are paid to eligible service providers for each eligible child enrolled at a service as an annual one-off payment, regardless of the child’s enrolment date.

# Appendices

**Timelines — key dates and tasks**

**Contacts — organisations to support service providers**

**Options for funding in exceptional circumstances**

**Resources for implementing the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework**

**National Quality Standard**

**Managing access to kindergarten places – case studies and framework**

**Long service and sick leave payments for staff employed prior to 1994**

**Kindergarten fee subsidy examples**

**Templates for the second year of funded kindergarten process**

**Information sheet and checklist for completing the Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten**

## Timelines - key dates and tasks

The following table provides a timeline for kindergarten funding and data collection relating to kindergarten programs for children in the year prior to school.

| **Timeline** | **Who** | | **Task** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Term one** | | | |
| January to June | Department’s regional office | Make monthly payments to service providers from the first Tuesday of the month from January to June based on data provided during the previous year. Send the payment history report in January to service providers that received payments. | |
| January to December | Service provider | If there is a change of teaching staff at a service, complete and submit a [*Change of early childhood teacher* *delivering a funded kindergarten program declaration*](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/careankinder/funding/datacollection.htm) to the appropriate Departmental regional office. | |
| February | Service provider | Receive and display your Kindergarten Program Certificate. | |
| February | Service provider | Contact regional KESOs to identify support for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children enrolled to attend kindergarten. | |
| By end March | Service provider | If there has been significant change to the number of anticipated enrolments previously advised to the Department, complete and submit [*Adjustment to anticipated kindergarten funding application (January–March)*](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/careankinder/funding/datacollection.htm) to the appropriate Departmental regional office. | |
| By end March | Service provider | Services are strongly encouraged to submit applications for Early Start Kindergarten funding prior to the end of term one. | |
| **Term two** | | | |
| April | Service provider | Complete the April confirmed data collection. | |
| April to December | Service provider | If applicable, service providers may submit [*Application for early childhood teacher supplement*](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/careankinder/funding/datacollection.htm)to the appropriate Departmental regional office from April of the year for which payment is sought. | |
| May to October | Service provider | If there are changes to enrolments or number of children eligible for fee subsidies, complete and submit [*Adjustment to confirmed kindergarten funding application*](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/careankinder/funding/datacollection.htm) to the appropriate Departmental regional office. | |
| June | Service provider | Promote enrolment in school. | |
| By the end of term two | Teacher | Assess children against the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* learning and development outcomes to identify any children with observed developmental delay who may benefit from a second year of kindergarten and develop and proceed in accordance with Part B. | |
| **Term three** | | | |
| July | Service provider | Kindergarten cluster managers complete and submit a Service Improvement Plan (SIP) to the appropriate Departmental regional office. | |
| July to December | Department’s regional office | Calculate per capita funding entitlement for payments from July to December based on information provided during the April confirmed data collection.  Make monthly payments to service providers from the first Tuesday of the month based on data provided in April.  Revise funding entitlement for January to June and send the payment history report in July to service providers that received adjusted payments. | |
| August | Teacher | Begin Kindergarten Inclusion Support Packages application process (see page [insert #] for more information). | |
| August | Service provider | Complete the online August census data collection. (Note this is for census purposes only. Any changes occurring after the April data collection must be reported using the appropriate form in order to ensure funding amounts are correct.) | |
| September | Teacher | Where applicable, complete and submit the [*Application form for kindergarten inclusion support services*](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/careankinder/inclusion/disabilities.htm) for eligible children to the appropriate Departmental regional office. | |
| By the end of third term | Teacher | Complete and submit a [*Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten*](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/careankinder/funding/datacollection.htm)to the relevant Department’s regional office for children that will benefit from a second year of kindergarten. For more information see Part B on page [insert #]. | |
| Term four | | | |
| October | Service provider | Where applicable, submit financial accountability requirements (FAR) forms to the appropriate Departmental regional office. | |
| October to November | Teacher | Finalise [*Transition Learning and Development Statements*](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/learning/Pages/transition.aspx), obtain consent from parents/guardians and forward final signed copy to the family, school (prep teacher) and Outside School Hours Care service (where appropriate), including documentation (*Second Year Statement*) for children transitioning into a second year of kindergarten. | |
| From November | Service provider | Complete and submit  [*Application for travel allowance for rural locations or application to adjust travel allowance funding*](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/careankinder/funding/datacollection.htm)for the coming year. | |
| From November | Service provider | Support school orientation processes. | |
| By 31 December | Service providers | If applicable, service providers must submit all [*Application*](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/careankinder/funding/datacollection.htm)*s for early childhood teacher supplement* to the appropriate Departmental regional office by 31 December of the year for which payment is sought. | |

## Contacts - organisations to support service providers

| **Name of organisation** | **Funded or contracted by the Department** | **Contact for:** | **Website** | **Phone** | **Fax** | **Email** | **Address** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ADP Australia/New Zealand | Contracted payroll service | Information about the free payroll service for certain service providers | [www.adppayroll.com.au](http://www.adppayroll.com.au) | 1300 763 652 | (03) 9566 7088 | [payline\_vic@au.adp.com](mailto:payline_vic@au.adp.com) | 9–11 Miles Street, Mulgrave, 3170 |
| All Graduates | Contracted to provide language services | Language services for service providers: telephone or on-site interpreting | [www.allgraduates.com.au](http://www.allgraduates.com.au) | **(03) 9605 3000 to book an appointment.  1300 200 680 to access telephone interpreting services.** |  |  |  |
| Association for Children with a Disability (ACD) |  | Publications and resources about inclusion | [www.acd.org.au](http://www.acd.org.au) | (03) 9818 2000 or  1800 654 013 |  |  |  |
| Bastow Institute |  | Advice on professional development programs and practice | [www.bastow.vic.edu.au](http://www.bastow.vic.edu.au) | 03) 8199 2900 |  | [bastow@bastow.vic.edu.au](mailto:bastow@bastow.vic.edu.au) | 603–615 Queensberry Street, North Melbourne, 3051 |
| Early Learning Association Australia (Formerly Kindergarten Parents Victoria Inc., KPV) | Funded to support service providers that deliver funded kindergarten programs | Advisory service (telephone and email) for assistance with quality improvement and support in implementing Government policy | [www.kpv.org.au](http://www.kpv.org.au) | (03) 9489 3500, 1300 730 119 (for rural callers) | (03) 9486 4226 | [kpv@kpv.org.au](mailto:kpv@kpv.org.au) | Level 3, 145 Smith Street,  Fitzroy, 3065 |
| FKA Children’s Services Inc. (FKA) | Funded to provide advice and resources | Advice and information about improving access for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds | [www.fka.com.au](http://www.fka.com.au) | (03) 9428 4471 | (03) 9429 9252 | [fkacs@fka.com.au](mailto:fkacs@fka.com.au) | 1st Floor, 9–11 Stewart Street  Richmond, 3121 |
| Gowrie Victoria | Funded to provide advice and resources | Advice on professional development and practice issues | [www.gowrievictoria.org.au](http://www.gowrievictoria.org.au) | (03) 9347 6388 | (03) 9347 7567 | [reception@gowrievictoria.org.au](mailto:reception@gowrievictoria.org.au) | Cnr Newry & Canning Streets, Carlton North, 3054 |
| Information Victoria |  | Copies of the *Welcome to Primary School* guide | [www.information.vic.gov.au](http://www.information.vic.gov.au) | 1300 366 356 |  | [parenthandbook@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:parenthandbook@edumail.vic.gov.au) |  |
| Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) | The legislated peak body representing local government in Victoria |  | [www.mav.asn.au](http://www.mav.asn.au) | (03) 9667 5555 | (03) 9667 5550 | [inquiries@mav.asn.au](mailto:inquiries@mav.asn.au) | Level 12, 60 Collins Street, Melbourne, 3000 |
| Play Australia Inc. | Funded to provide support and advice | Peak body providing advice and support on outdoor play and recreation to the early childhood sector | [www.playaustralia.org.au](http://www.playaustralia.org.au) | (03) 8846 4111 |  | [info@playaustralia.org](mailto:info@playaustralia.org) | P.O. Box 2060, North Melbourne, 3051 |
| State Library of Victoria, Kindergarten IT Program | Funded to provide IT support to kindergarten cluster managers and community-based service providers that operate funded kindergarten programs | IT and web support | [www.kindergarten.vic.gov.au](http://www.kindergarten.vic.gov.au) | (03) 8664 7001.  Toll Free: 1800 629 835 (country callers only). | (03) 9639 2175 | [kindergarten@vicnet.net.au](mailto:kindergarten@vicnet.net.au) |  |
| Victorian Managed Insurance Authority (VMIA) | Contracted to manage the Community Service Organisation Insurance Program | More information about the CSO Insurance Program, insurance or claims inquiries | <http://www.vmia.vic.gov.au/Insurance/Policies-and-Manuals/Community-Service-Organisations-Program.aspx> | Insurance Advisor: (03) 9270 6922.  Account Manager: (03) 9270 6969. Claims Officer:  (03) 9270 6843 | Insurance Advisor:  (03) 9270 6911 Account Manager:  (03) 9270 6911 Claims Officer: (03) 9270 6911 |  | 30/35 Collins Street, Melbourne, 3000 |
| Vocational Education and Training Assessment Services (VETASSESS) | Contracted to manage and administer the validation process for early childhood teachers | Information about the validation process | [www.vetassess.com.au](http://www.vetassess.com.au) | (03) 9655 4801 |  |  | Level 5, 478 Albert Street, East Melbourne, GPO Box 2752, Melbourne, 3001 |

## Options for funding in exceptional circumstances

In circumstances where it is not possible to fully comply with the funding guidelines, and a service provider in receipt of kindergarten funding is unable to meet all of the eligibility criteria and/or operational requirements set out in the *Kindergarten Guide*, a request may be made to the appropriate Departmental regional office for funding to be continued throughout a period of non-compliance until the service provider returns to compliance. This provision does not apply to service providers applying for kindergarten funding for the first time or for service providers already in receipt of funding adding a new service.

Applications are only considered in circumstances where children will have no other access to an education and care program if funding is not approved (and no other alternative arrangements are possible).

### Exceptional circumstances

In exceptional circumstances, service providers may apply to:

* have a teacher who holds a primary teaching qualification plan and deliver a funded kindergarten program
* operate a program with fewer than the minimum required enrolments
* operate a program in a service which has been rated against the National Quality Standard as ‘Significant Improvement Required’

#### Provision for an educator other than an early childhood teacher to plan and deliver a funded kindergarten program

The Department requires service providers to make extensive and genuine endeavours to employ an early childhood teacher holding an approved early childhood teaching qualification.

The service provider will be expected to provide evidence of:

* local and state-wide advertisements via print or electronic media
* contact with employment service providers
* contact with locally employed early childhood teachers
* contact with tertiary institutions
* exploration of alternatives such as job sharing, requesting staff to work additional hours, reorganising hours of operation
* investigation into workforce initiatives that support the recruitment of early childhood teaching staff, and submission of an application if eligible (see [www.education.vic.gov.au/careers/earlychildhood/scholarships/](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/careers/earlychildhood/scholarships/)).

If a teacher holding an approved early childhood qualification cannot be recruited, service providers should be in regular contact with the appropriate Departmental regional office to discuss options.

| **Situation** | **Action** |
| --- | --- |
| Primary teacher engaged for up to 12 weeks to replace an early childhood teacher. | Advise the appropriate Departmental regional office of temporary arrangements. |
| Temporary appointment of a primary teacher for more than 12 weeks to replace an early childhood teacher on extended leave (such as extended sick leave, maternity or long-service leave). | The service provider must apply to the appropriate Departmental regional office for continued funding. Under this scenario, the primary teacher does not need to be enrolled and actively working towards an approved Early Childhood (EC) qualification, but should be mentored by an early childhood teacher. |
| Permanent appointment of a primary teacher to replace a qualified early childhood teacher. | The service provider must apply to the appropriate Departmental regional office for continued funding. The primary teacher must be enrolled and actively working towards an approved EC teaching qualification. |
| Temporary appointment of an educator who does not hold a teaching qualification. | The service provider must apply to the appropriate Departmental regional office for continued funding. The educator must be enrolled and actively working towards an approved EC teaching qualification and ideally be appointed in a team teaching arrangement with an early childhood teacher. |

#### Providing a service with fewer than the required enrolments

Existing services with a requirement to operate with a minimum of 20 enrolments can seek to operate with fewer enrolments when no other options are available, and where children will not have access to a kindergarten program if funding is not approved. The application needs to articulate longer-term viability issues and integrated planning, in addition to the impact upon users of the service.

Service providers must demonstrate:

* a community need for the service and/or its compatibility with Municipal Early Years Plans
* there is no capacity in neighbouring services to absorb these enrolments
* a budget or business plan has been prepared showing the service is financially viable and
* how the service provider is moving to re-establish the minimum enrolments for the following year or is undertaking discussions regarding future rationalisation or consolidation of the service. In some specific circumstances, such as early intervention or Koorie programs, service providers may continue to be approved for funding in cases where services have with fewer than the minimum enrolments.

#### Operating a program in a service which has been rated against the National Quality Standard as ‘Significant Improvement Required’

The risk of services closing due to poor quality ratings will impact on the availability of kindergarten places for children. For this reason, provision has been made for continued funding for service providers operating funded kindergarten programs in services that have been assessed by the Regulatory Authority against the National Quality Standard and have received a rating of ‘Significant Improvement Required’ in any quality area.

Should a service be assesssed as ‘Significant Improvement Required’, it will trigger an immediate review of the service’s funding.

## Resources for implementing the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework

A range of professional resources have been developed by the Department and the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority to support the implementation of the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework*. A CD-ROM with these resources was sent to all service providers and kindergarten cluster managers in 2012.

Other resources to support implementation of approved learning frameworks are also available.

| **Name of resource** | **Description** | **Website** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* | The *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* is available online. Hard copies may be requested by email: [veyldf@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:veyldf@edumail.vic.gov.au). | <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/edcare/pages/veyladf.aspx> |
| Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework Evidence Papers | A series of eight Evidence Papers guide educators to understand the research and literature that supports each of the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* practice principles. Each paper describes what the practice principle is; why it’s important to teaching and learning; how professionals engage in best-practice; and the implications for best practice. | <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/edcare/Pages/profresource.aspx> |
| Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework Practice Guides | A series of eight Practice Guides provide advice about practice and pedagogy around each of the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* practice principles. | <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/edcare/Pages/profresource.aspx> |
| Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework Professional Learning Modules | Four Professional Learning Modules are available to support early childhood professionals to embed the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* in daily practice.  The modules are available on [FUSE](https://fuse.education.vic.gov.au/pages/Teacher.aspx) as resource packages. Each module contains short videos with examples, exercises suitable for individual or team use and supporting materials.  Module 1 - [An Introduction to the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework and Reflective Practice](https://fuse.education.vic.gov.au/pages/View.aspx?pin=BM8899)  Module 2 - [An Introduction to Collaborative Practice](https://fuse.education.vic.gov.au/pages/View.aspx?id=a6be632b-e331-4dad-8114-9ff6d0dfcc91&Source=%252fpages%252fRss.aspx%253fs%253dLearning%252bmodules%2526col%253dwww.education.vic.gov.au)  Module 3 - [An Introduction to Effective Practice](https://fuse.education.vic.gov.au/pages/View.aspx?pin=ZK2FPL&Source=%252fpages%252fTeacher.aspx)  Module 4: Assessment for Learning and Development: the Early Years Planning Cycle | <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/edcare/Pages/veyldfproflearn.aspx> |
| Early Years Exchange (EYE) | EYE is a series of online publications designed to assist early childhood professionals to implement and embed the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* in their practice. Each issue provides a video presentation from early childhood professionals from a range of settings. | [www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/earlyyears/eye/index.html](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/earlyyears/eye/index.html) |
| Early Years Learning Framework implementation resources | Designed by Early Childhood Australia to assist practitioners to implement the Early Years Learning Framework. | http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/resource\_themes/eylf\_early\_years\_learning\_framework.html |
| Learning English as an Additional Language Resource Booklet | The Learning English as an Additional Language in the Early Years (birth to six years) Resource Booklet provides comprehensive information to support early childhood professionals in their work with young children from culturally and linguistically diverse communities in the context of implementing the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework*. | http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/earlyyears/learning\_english\_as\_additional\_lang\_1.pdf |
| Learning and Development Outcomes linked to the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS). | The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority provides a webpage showing the links between the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework*’s Learning and Development Outcomes and the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (Learning Foci, Standards and Support Materials) to support program planning for early childhood professionals in services and schools. | <http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/earlyyears/vfldoutcomes/index.aspx> |
| Report on the Outcomes Project 2010-2011: Shining a light on children’s learning | The Outcomes Project used an inquiry-based model of professional learning with a range of early childhood professionals in services and schools to: consider what children are demonstrating in the five learning and development outcomes from birth to eight years; examine and analyse in depth the learning and development outcomes; and use a range of resources to support documentation and analysis of children’s learning and development. | <http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/earlyyears/OutcomesProject.pdf> |
| Transition to school resources from the Department | The Department provides a range of resources to support transition to school:  [Transition: A Positive Start to School Guide](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/learning/positivetransition.pdf) – to provide advice on improving children’s experience of starting school for families and early childhood services.  [Transition: A Positive Start to School Resource Kit](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/learning/trkall.pdf) – to help early childhood services, outside school hours care (OSHC) services and schools improve transition-to-school planning for children, their families and educators.  [Strength-based approach: A guide to writing Transition Learning and Development Statements](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/learning/strengthbasedapproach.pdf) – to enhance early childhood professionals understanding of the strength-based approach and its application to writing and interpreting *Transition Learning and Development Statements*.  [Using the Transition Learning and Development Statement to inform curriculum design: a Practical Guide](https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlylearning/transition-statement-curriculum-design.pdf) – to help Preparatory Class (prep) teachers use *Transition Learning and Development Statements* to inform curriculum design and delivery. | <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/transition/Pages/transition.aspx> |

## National Quality Standard

*National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care* (the *National Quality Framework*), which took effect on 1 January 2012, includes a National Quality Standard, against which services are assessed and rated. The *Kindergarten Guide* does not provide comprehensive information about the *National Quality Framework*. The following table, showing a summary of National Quality Standard quality areas, standards and elements, is an excerpt from the [National Quality Framework Resource Kit](http://acecqa.gov.au/resources-and-templates/national-quality-framework-resource-kits/). The resource kit and the [ACECQA](http://acecqa.gov.au/) website has full information about the *National Quality Framework* and National Quality Standards.

### Summary table of National Quality Standard quality areas, standards and elements

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **QA1** | **Educational program and practice** |
| 1.1 | An approved learning framework informs the development of a curriculum that enhances each child’s learning and development. |
| 1.1.1 | Curriculum decision making contributes to each child’s learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators. |
| 1.1.2 | Each child’s current knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program. |
| 1.1.3 | The program, including routines, is organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child’s learning. |
| 1.1.4 | The documentation about each child’s program and progress is available to families. |
| 1.1.5 | Every child is supported to participate in the program. |
| 1.1.6 | Each child’s agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions and influence events and their world. |
| 1.2 | Educators and co-ordinators are focused, active and reflective in designing and delivering the program for each child. |
| 1.2.1 | Each child’s learning and development is assessed as part of an ongoing cycle of planning, documenting and evaluation. |
| 1.2.2 | Educators respond to children’s ideas and play and use intentional teaching to scaffold and extend each child’s learning. |
| 1.2.3 | Critical reflection on children’s learning and development, both as individuals and in groups, is regularly used to implement the program. |
| **QA2** | **Children’s health and safety** |
| 2.1 | Each child’s health is promoted. |
| 2.1.1 | Each child’s health needs are supported. |
| 2.1.2 | Each child’s comfort is provided for and there are appropriate opportunities to meet each child’s need for sleep, rest and relaxation. |
| 2.1.3 | Effective hygiene practices are promoted and implemented. |
| 2.1.4 | Steps are taken to control the spread of infectious diseases and to manage injuries and illness, in accordance with recognised guidelines. |
| 2.2 | Healthy eating and physical activity are embedded in the program for children. |
| 2.2.1 | Healthy eating is promoted and food and drinks provided by the service are nutritious and appropriate for each child. |
| 2.2.2 | Physical activity is promoted through planned and spontaneous experiences and is appropriate for each child. |
| 2.3 | Each child is protected. |
| 2.3.1 | Children are adequately supervised at all times. |
| 2.3.2 | Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury. |
| 2.3.3 | Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented. |
| 2.3.4 | Educators, co-ordinators and staff members are aware of their roles and responsibilities to respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **QA3** | **Physical environment** |
| 3.1 | The design and location of the premises is appropriate for the operation of a service. |
| 3.1.1 | Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, furniture, equipment, facilities and resources are suitable for their purpose. |
| 3.1.2 | Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained. |
| 3.1.3 | Facilities are designed or adapted to ensure access and participation by every child in the service and to allow flexible use, and interaction between indoor and outdoor space. |
| 3.2 | The environment is inclusive, promotes competence, independent exploration and learning through play. |
| 3.2.1 | Outdoor and indoor spaces are designed and organised to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments. |
| 3.2.2 | Resources, materials and equipment are sufficient in number, organised in ways that ensure appropriate and effective implementation of the program and allow for multiple uses. |
| 3.3 | The service takes an active role in caring for its environment and contributes to a sustainable future. |
| 3.3.1 | Sustainable practices are embedded in service operations. |
| 3.3.2 | Children are supported to become environmentally responsible and show respect for the environment. |
| **QA4** | **Staffing arrangements** |
| 4.1 | Staffing arrangements enhance children’s learning and development and ensure their safety and wellbeing. |
| 4.1.1 | Educator-to-child ratios and qualification requirements are maintained at all times. |
| 4.2 | Educators, co-ordinators and staff members are respectful and ethical. |
| 4.2.1 | Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships. |
| 4.2.2 | Educators, co-ordinators and staff members work collaboratively and affirm, challenge, support and learn from each other to further develop their skills, to improve practice and relationships. |
| 4.2.3 | Interactions convey mutual respect, equity and recognition of each other’s strengths and skills. |
| **QA5** | **Relationships with children** |
| 5.1 | Respectful and equitable relationships are developed and maintained with each child. |
| 5.1.1 | Interactions with each child are warm, responsive and build trusting relationships. |
| 5.1.2 | Every child is able to engage with educators in meaningful, open interactions that support the acquisition of skills for life and learning. |
| 5.1.3 | Each child is supported to feel secure, confident and included. |
| 5.2 | Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships with other children and adults. |
| 5.2.1 | Each child is supported to work with, learn from and help others through collaborative learning opportunities. |
| 5.2.2 | Each child is supported to manage their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts. |
| 5.2.3 | The dignity and rights of every child are maintained at all times. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **QA6** | **Collaborative partnerships with families and communities** |
| 6.1 | Respectful supportive relationships with families are developed and maintained. |
| 6.1.1 | There is an effective enrolment and orientation process for families. |
| 6.1.2 | Families have opportunities to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions. |
| 6.1.3 | Current information about the service is available to families. |
| 6.2 | Families are supported in their parenting role and their values and beliefs about child rearing are respected. |
| 6.2.1 | The expertise of families is recognised and they share in decision making about their child’s learning and wellbeing. |
| 6.2.2 | Current information is available to families about community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing. |
| 6.3 | The service collaborates with other organisations and service providers to enhance children’s learning and wellbeing. |
| 6.3.1 | Links with relevant community and support agencies are established and maintained. |
| 6.3.2 | Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing relevant information and clarifying responsibilities. |
| 6.3.3 | Access to inclusion and support assistance is facilitated. |
| 6.3.4 | The service builds relationships and engages with their local community. |
| **QA7** | **Leadership and service management** |
| 7.1 | Effective leadership promotes a positive organisational culture and builds a professional learning community. |
| 7.1.1 | Appropriate governance arrangements are in place to manage the service. |
| 7.1.2 | The induction of educators, co-ordinators and staff members is comprehensive. |
| 7.1.3 | Every effort is made to promote continuity of educators and co-ordinators at the service. |
| 7.1.4 | Provision is made to ensure a suitably qualified and experienced educator or co-ordinator leads the development of the curriculum and ensures the establishment of clear goals and expectations for teaching and learning. |
| 7.1.5 | Adults working with children and those engaged in management of the service or residing on the premises are fit and proper. |
| 7.2 | There is a commitment to continuous improvement. |
| 7.2.1 | A statement of philosophy is developed and guides all aspects of the service’s operations. |
| 7.2.2 | The performance of educators, co-ordinators and staff members is evaluated and individual development plans are in place to support performance improvement. |
| 7.2.3 | An effective self-assessment and quality improvement process is in place. |
| 7.3 | Administrative systems enable the effective management of a quality service. |
| 7.3.1 | Records and information are stored appropriately to ensure confidentiality, are available from the service and are maintained in accordance with legislative requirements. |
| 7.3.2 | Administrative systems are established and maintained to ensure the effective operation of the service. |
| 7.3.3 | The Regulatory Authority is notified of any relevant changes to the operation of the service, of serious incidents and any complaints which allege a breach of legislation. |
| 7.3.4 | Processes are in place to ensure that all grievances and complaints are addressed, investigated fairly and documented in a timely manner. |
| 7.3.5 | Service practices are based on effectively documented policies and procedures that are available at the service and reviewed regularly. |

## Managing access to kindergarten places – case studies and framework

### Case Study 1

Two families with children who will be eligible to attend a funded kindergarten program in 2016 apply on different dates for the same program at Littleton Kindergarten. This service provider has an enrolment policy that enables families to apply to enrol their child in a funded kindergarten program once the child has turned two years of age.

* Loc Tran turns two years of age on 12 October 2013 and the family submit an application on the 15th October 2013 to enrol him in a funded kindergarten program in 2016.
* Kim Smith turns two years of age on 25 February 2014 and the family apply on that date to enrol her in a funded kindergarten program in 2016.

In this instance, the service provider should not use the date of application to prioritise the application for Loc over the application for Kim. This is because both children are in the same eligible age cohort and using the date of application in this way would disadvantage the younger child Kim, who should be given equal access to the 2016 kindergarten program on the basis of age.

Littleton Kindergarten should consider using other locally agreed criteria not related to the birth date of the child to prioritise applications within the eligible cohort.

### Case Study 2

From 1 April each year Gladesville Community Kindergarten opens applications for kindergarten enrolment for children eligible to attend a funded kindergarten program in the following year. All families with eligible children can apply from that date. Applications are then prioritised according to the date of application.

* The Ryan family has a child, Liam, who will turn four years of age on 15 January 2014. The family applies on 1 April 2013 to enrol Liam into a funded kindergarten program in 2014.
* The Barrossi family has a child, Helen, who will turn four years of age on 22 October 2013. The family applies on the 26 May 2013 to enrol Helen into a funded kindergarten program in 2014.

In this case, the application to enrol Liam was received earlier and will be given priority over the application to enrol Helen. This policy approach does not use age or any other protected attributes to prioritise applications within the eligible cohort.

### Case Study 3

Altwood Kindergarten accepts applications for enrolment in their funded kindergarten program during the period 1 February to 30 June each year, for children who will be eligible to attend in the following year. The service provider has a managing access to kindergarten places policy that gives high priority to ‘at risk’ children, including those at risk of abuse and neglect.

In addition, the service provider uses a range of weighted criteria and a cumulative score to prioritise applications received. All families who apply within the allocated period are given the same maximum score against their date of application. Applications submitted after 30 June receive a lower score against the date of application, with the score progressively decreasing towards the end of the year. This policy approach means that factors other than age are used to determine how applications are prioritised.

The Brown family applies to enrol their son on 3 February 2013, and the Kumar family completes an application for enrolment for their daughter on 21 June 2013. Both families receive the same maximum score for the date of application. The Grant family submit an application on 2 August 2013 and receive a lower score against the date of application; however, they may score higher on other criteria depending on their circumstances.

Elisha Wood is referred to the kindergarten on 16 August by a Child Protection Officer. Elisha is identified by the service provider as a child at risk of abuse or neglect and moves to the top of the waiting list. Elisha’s family will be offered a place at the kindergarten in the first round of offers.

In this example, a range of factors other than age are used to determine where families are placed on the priority list.

### Framework

A framework of how service providers might apply the managing access to kindergarten places guidelines and practice principles is provided below (see Framework for managing kindergarten registration and enrolment processes). The framework is provided as an example only. It should not be considered as the only suitable approach to managing access to funded kindergarten programs.

#### Framework for managing kindergarten registration and enrolment processes

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Timeline for application and offer process** | **APPLICATION PERIOD**  The application period may commence 1, 2, or 3 years prior to cohort year for all children eligible to attend in the cohort year.  Services may use rounds to give a priority weighting to applications if required.  A service provider may elect to receive an application for enrolment on or after a child’s birthday. However, in these circumstances, the date of application should not be used to prioritise the application. | | | **OFFER AND ALLOCATION PERIOD**  ‘Late’ applications continue to be accepted in this period. | | **KINDERGARTEN YEAR**  *For example*  **COHORT 2015**  must be 4 years old by  30 April 2015 | |
| ***Jan 2013***  Round A | ***July 2013***  Round B | ***January 2014***  *Round C* | ***July 2014***  Round 1 | ***Sept 2014***  Round 2 | ***Dec 2014***  Round 3 | ***Feb 2015***  Year begins |
| **Managing access to kindergarten places policy** | High priority children, as identified in government or service provider policy, move to the top of the waiting list. | | | Reserve some places in groups offered in rounds 1 and 2 to hold for late applications from high priority children. | | Close off reserved places end November or December. Late enrolments then offered places where vacancies exist. | |
| **Policy for prioritising the offer of places** | Other children may have a weighting applied if needed to give a preference scale for the offer of places. Factors may be guided by government policy but should be determined locally and *may* include such things as:   * Residential proximity to the funded kindergarten program * Siblings attend the kindergarten * Round in which application received. | | | Develop service models to accommodate demand. After high priority children are allocated to groups, start allocation to groups in preferred centres in accordance with weighted waiting list. | | By February all eligible children in the list have been offered a place (not necessarily at a first preference centre where demand exceeds capacity).  Late enrolments offered places where vacancies exist. | |

## Long service and sick leave payments for staff employed prior to 1994

### Long service leave payments pre-1994

The Department holds funds accrued by staff employed in kindergartens prior to 24 January 1994. All enquiries regarding payment to staff who were employed prior to 1994 and have become eligible for long service leave after this time should directed to the kindergarten payroll service (see page 31). Payment will be made in accordance with relevant legislation.

A service provider should only pay long service leave after checking that the staff member is eligible for long service leave.

To make a claim for a long service leave payment, contact the kindergarten payroll service contractor for a *Kindergarten long service leave pre-1994 form*.

### Sick leave payments pre-1994

The Department holds funds for sick leave entitlements accrued by staff employed in Victorian kindergartens prior to 24 January 1994. All queries regarding payment of pre-1994 kindergarten staff entitlements for sick leave should be directed to the kindergarten payroll service contractor. Payment will be made in accordance with relevant legislation for sick leave in relation to work at a funded kindergarten location.

The Department will only provide payment for sick leave if the service provider has already paid the equivalent of one full year’s sick leave for that staff member in the current calendar year.

Service providers should only pay sick leave or request a payment from the payroll support service contractor after checking that the staff member has an entitlement to sick leave.

To make a claim, contact the Kindergarten payroll service contractor for a *Kindergarten sick leave pre-1994 form*. Funding for the sick leave entitlement is paid as a separate payment directly to the service provider.

## Kindergarten fee subsidy examples

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Service type** | **Annual fee** | **Fee to families eligible for kindergarten fee subsidy** |
| **Services offering a 15 hour kindergarten program per week – KFS funding $1254** | | |
| Kindergarten service | $1250 | No cost |
| Kindergarten service | $1300 | No cost |
| Long day care service offering sessional program with separate fee | $1200 | No cost |
| **Services offering a 18 hour program per week – KFS funding $1254** | | |
| Kindergarten service | $1250 | No cost |
| Kindergarten service | $1500  Average annual fee: $1500 divided by 18 = $83  Additional three hours a week costs $250 | In this instance, families pay the gap fee of $246.00, which is the difference between the annual fee and the kindergarten fee subsidy, because it is a lower rate than the cost of an additional three hours |
| Kindergarten service | $2000  Average annual fee: $2000 divided by 18 = $111  Additional three hours a week costs $333 | Fee for additional three hours at a cost of $333 per year |
| **Alternative services offering a 30 hour program per week – KFS funding $1254** | | |
| Alternative service providing 30 hours a week | $6000 | Eligible families access the program at a cost of $4746, which is the difference between the annual fee and the kindergarten fee subsidy |

## Templates for the second year of funded kindergarten process

To download versions of these templates that can be completed electronically, go to the Department’s [forms](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/careankinder/funding/datacollection.htm) page.

Ensure each completed template is retained on the child’s enrolment record at the service.

* *Term three plan for learning and development*
* *Second Year Discussion*
* *Second Year Statement*

### Term three plan for learning and development

The *Term three plan for learning and development* summarises the child’s strengths, identifies their interests and indicates how they can be supported to continue on their learning journey. The early childhood teacher and parents/guardians should work together to complete this plan.

**Child information**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Child Given Name: |  | | |
| Child Family Name: |  | | |
| Child Date of Birth: | /       / | Male | Female |

**Service information**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of Children’s Service: |  |
| Name of Child’s Teacher: |  |
| Date Plan was Prepared: | /       / |

**Term three plan for learning and development**

This plan is to be completed by the child’s early childhood teacher, in collaboration with the child’s parents/guardians. Teachers may find it useful to refer to the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) for a description of the five outcome areas when completing this plan.

This plan should be retained on the child’s file and be available for audit by officers of the Department. You will be required to evidence all the information listed below for an audit. It is recommended that this template be used, however other programming templates are acceptable as long as all the information listed below is documented in the alternate planning format.

**The context of the early years setting**

Please include or attach:

* Philosophy of the learning environment
* Description of program delivery (e.g. the key experiences that the kindergarten program offers, the sessions that this child attends, average number of children in a session, part of long day care program)
* Attendance history of child

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**The child’s interests and skills**

Include a summary of the child’s learning and development with regard to the child’s interests and skills

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|  |

**What experiences, activities are planned to further enhance the child’s learning and development in term three?**

(e.g. additional resources, how the program or equipment may be modified to account for the child’s level of learning and development)

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| --- |
|  |

**Assessment**

This section asks you to assess the child’s level of learning and development in the five outcomes areas identified in the VEYLDF. Please indicate areas where the child is developing as you would expect, and areas where their level of learning and development may need additional support. Include goals for meeting outcomes and strategies that will be implemented to build the child’s skills.

NOTE: Include support services that the child may need to achieve this. Consider also if these services could be provided through a school.

**Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity**

Include or attach:

Teacher’s assessment of the child (see VEYLDF), key goals/milestones and strategies that will be employed to build the child’s skills in this outcome area

|  |
| --- |
| **Initial assessment: OUTCOME 1. Identity**  Children have a strong sense of identity, and   * Feel safe, secure and supported * Develop their emerging autonomy, interdependence, resilience and sense of agency * Develop knowledgeable and confident self identities * Learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect |
| **Goals for child’s level of learning and development for term three** |
| **Strategies focused on child’s level of learning and development for term three** |
| **Assessment at the end of term three**  Teachers assessment of the child’s level of learning and development against the key goals and milestones. Include comments on whether the strategies that were put into place were effective. Why/why not? |
| **Parents/guardians comments** about the child’s level of learning and development during term three |

**Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world**

Include or attach:

Teacher’s assessment of the child (see VEYLDF), key goals/milestones and strategies that will be employed to build the child’s skills in this outcome area

|  |
| --- |
| **Initial assessment: OUTCOME 2: Community**  Children are connected and contribute to their world, and   * Develop a strong sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active civic participation * Respond to diversity with respect * Become aware of fairness * Become socially responsible and show respect for the environment |
| **Goals for child’s level of learning and development for term three** |
| **Strategies focused on child’s level of learning and development for term three** |
| **Assessment at the end of term three**  Teachers assessment of the child’s level of learning and development against the key goals and milestones. Include comments on whether the strategies that were put into place were effective. Why/why not? |
| **Parents/guardians comments** about the child’s level of learning and development during term three |

Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

Include or attach:

Teacher’s assessment of the child (see VEYLDF), key goals/milestones and strategies that will be employed to build the child’s skills in this outcome area

|  |
| --- |
| **OUTCOME 3: Wellbeing**  Children have a strong sense of wellbeing, and   * Become strong in their social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing * Take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing |
| **Goals for child’s level of learning and development for term three** |
| **Strategies focused on child’s level of learning and development for term three** |
| **Assessment at the end of term three**  Teachers assessment of the child’s level of learning and development against the key goals and milestones. Include comments on whether the strategies that were put into place were effective. Why/why not? |
| **Parents/guardians comments** about the child’s level of learning and development during term three: |

**Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners**

Include or attach:

Teacher’s assessment of the child (see VEYLDF), key goals/milestones and strategies that will be employed to build the child’s skills in this outcome area

|  |
| --- |
| **OUTCOME 4: Learning**  Children are confident and involved learners, and   * Develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity * Develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesizing, researching and investigating * Transfer and adapt what they have learnt from one context to another * Resource their own learning through connecting with people, place terminologies and natural and processed materials |
| **Goals for child’s level of learning and development for term three** |
| **Strategies focused on child’s level of learning and development for term three** |
| **Assessment at the end of term three**  Teachers assessment of the child’s level of learning and development against the key goals and milestones. Include comments on whether the strategies that were put into place were effective. Why/why not? |
| **Parents/guardians comments** about the child’s level of learning and development during term three: |

Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators

Include or attach:

Teacher’s assessment of the child (see VEYLDF), key goals/milestones and strategies that will be employed to build the child’s skills in this outcome area

|  |
| --- |
| **OUTCOME 5: Communication**  Children are effective communicators, and   * Interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes * Engage with a range of texts and get meaning from these texts * Express ideas and make meaning using a range of media * Begin to understand how symbols and pattern systems work * Use information and communication technologies to access information , investigate ideas and represent their thinking |
| **Goals for child’s level of learning and development for term three** |
| **Strategies focused on child’s level of learning and development for term three** |
| **Assessment at the end of term three**  Teachers assessment of the child’s level of learning and development against the key goals and milestones. Include comments on whether the strategies that were put into place were effective. Why/why not? |
| **Parents/guardians comments** about the child’s level of learning and development during term three |

**Additional information (optional)**

Include or attach here other factors that may impact on a child’s learning and development, such as their family situation, illness or social demographics

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|  |

### Second Year Discussion

**The early childhood teacher should discuss the following questions with the child’s parent/guardian.**

***The information will help identify the child’s level of learning and development, based on the knowledge and opinion of early childhood specialists. If only one, or none, of these specialists has been consulted, it is strongly recommended that this is pursued by the parents/guardians before declaring the child eligible for a second year of kindergarten.***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Has the child undertaken an MCH 3½-year-old health and developmental assessment including vision screen, or a 4-year-old health screen? | Yes  No |
| If yes, please describe results regarding the child’s level of learning and development: | |
| If the child attended childcare prior to starting kindergarten, has a childcare educator supplied information regarding the child’s level of learning and development when they were under their care? | Yes  No |
| If yes, please provide details of the feedback received from the childcare educator: | |
| Has an early childhood specialist been consulted regarding the observed delay in learning and development? | Yes  No |
| If yes, please briefly describe the specialist’s advice regarding the child’s level of learning and development and their transition to school: | |
| Has a Preschool Field Officer (PSFO) provided support to this child and/or advice to the kindergarten? | Yes  No |
| If yes, please briefly describe the PSFO’s advice: | |

***The following set of questions are important for establishing if a parent/guardian has considered sending the child to school next year, and for determining the resources that the school has to support this child. If no contact has been made with a school regarding the child’s transition and the resources that may be available, it is advisable to make contact with the school before proceeding further. This will help determine if the child will benefit more from attending school, or from attending kindergarten next year.***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Has the parent/guardian made contact with the school the child is likely to attend and had a discussion about enrolling the child for school next year?  (If not, it is recommended this is undertaken before a declaration of eligibility is submitted) | Yes  No |
| If yes, please provide details of the feedback received from the school: | |
| If applicable. If this child has a severe disability and receives a Kindergarten Inclusion Support (KIS) Package, review and discuss the Sharing Our Journey parent kit for the transition from kindergarten to school. Provide details of the discussion: | |

Please provide details of the prospective school that the child will attend.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of school |  |
| Suburb |  |

***These questions will help parents/guardians to take into account the considerations of delaying their child’s entry to school (i.e. they may be separated from their friendship group, their age compared to that of their peers at kindergarten and school etc).***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What will the child’s age be next year? (*i.e. in the year they will attend a second year of kindergarten or school for the first time)* | Child’s age: |
| If the child will be six in the year they attend a second year of kindergarten, are the parents/guardians aware that an application for school exemption is required? | Yes  No |
| Please Comment: | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Has the child developed a friendship group at kindergarten? | Yes  No |
| Please Comment: | |
| Will any of the children from the friendship group be attending the school this child may attend next year? | Yes  No |
| If not, are there other formal or informal supports such as family friends or neighbours attending the school this child may attend? | |

***These questions ask you to detail the benefits that you foresee for this child if they attend a second year of kindergarten.***

|  |
| --- |
| Please detail why a second year of kindergarten is being considered as the best option for the child next year: |

|  |
| --- |
| Please detail what evidence there is to suggest that the child will benefit from a second year of funded kindergarten: |

|  |
| --- |
| Please list what support will be provided by the early childhood education and care service and how will this differ from what could be provided by the school: |

An evaluation of the *Term three plan for learning and development* along with the answers provided to these questions should inform the decision about whether the child should transition to school or attend a second year of kindergarten. If the early childhood teacher and the child’s parent/guardian agree that a second year of funded kindergarten will better support the learning and development outcomes for the child, the early childhood teacher should complete *Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten*.

### Second Year Statement

The *Second Year Statement* aligns with the information required on the *Transition Learning and Development Statement*. The *Second Year Statement* is developed to provide valuable information to help identify how children can best be supported as they transition into a second year of kindergarten.

If the parent/guardian subsequently decides to send their child to school rather than kindergarten, the information should be transferred to the *Transition Learning and Development Statement* template and the necessary parent/guardian consent should be sought.

***Service information***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of Children’s Service: |  |
| Name of teacher who is completing this statement: |  |
| Telephone no. (business hours): |  |
| Email address: |  |
| Date statement was prepared: | /       / |

***Child Information***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Child Given Name: |  | | |
| Child Family Name: |  | | |
| Child Date of Birth: | /       / | Male | Female |
| Early childhood education and care service where child will attend for second year (where known): |  | | |

***Parent/guardian Information***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of Parent/Guardian: |  |
| Relationship to Child: |  |
| Telephone no. *(business hours)*: |  |
| Email address: |  |

***Parent/guardian consent.*** *Please complete only if the child will attend a second year of funded kindergarten at another early childhood education and care service*

**For Parent / Guardian**

The *Second Year Statement* summarises your child’s strengths, identifies their interests and indicates how they can be supported to continue on their learning journey.

You are asked to complete, part of this statement and your child’s early childhood teacher will complete the remainder. You will receive a copy of the full statement.

In the event that you decide to send your child to another early childhood education and care service next year to access a second year of funded kindergarten and if you give consent, the early childhood teacher will pass it on to your child’s new early childhood education and care service.

In the event that you decide to send your child to school next year, the early childhood teacher will transfer this information to your child’s *Transition Learning and Development Statement* to help your child’s Prep teacher get a better understanding of your child’s level of learning and development before they start school. You will be asked to sign a new consent for the new statement.

All information in this statement will be retained by the early childhood service in accordance with Victorian privacy laws. You can request access to this information at any time and you can request for it to be corrected if required.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| In the event that your child undertakes a second year of kindergarten at another service or with another teacher do you consent to the early childhood educator providing a copy to the service and discussing the information in this statement with your child’s other kindergarten teacher? | | Yes  No |
| In the event that your child attends school next year, do you consent to the early childhood teacher transferring the information in this statement to your child’s *Transition Learning and Development Statement*? | | Yes  No |
| Name of Parent/Guardian: |  | |
| Signature of Parent/Guardian: |  | |
| Date: | /       / | |

**To be completed by the child’s early childhood teacher**

This statement is to be completed by the child’s early childhood teacher, in collaboration with the child’s parent/guardian. Teachers should refer to the guidelines for completing this statement in the Transition: A Positive Start to School Resource Kit. Teachers may also find it useful to refer to the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework for a description of the five outcome areas and the Strength-based approach: A guide to writing Transition Learning and Development Statements.

**The context of the early years setting**

Please include:

* Philosophy of the learning environment
* Description of program delivery (e.g. the key experiences that the kindergarten program offers, the sessions that this child attends, average number of children in a session, part of long day care program)
* Attendance history of child

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**Things that might help to enhance the child’s learning and development experience in a second year of kindergarten** (e.g. additional resources, how the program or equipment may be modified to account for the child’s level of learning and development)

|  |
| --- |
| **IDENTITY – The child's sense of identity** |
| **COMMUNITY – The child’s connection with and contribution to their world** |

|  |
| --- |
| **WELLBEING – The child's sense of wellbeing** |
| **LEARNING – The child’s confidence and involvement in learning** |
| **COMMUNICATION – The child's communication** |
| **The child's interests** |
| **Additional information – (optional)** |

**(Optional)** To be completed by the child’s family *only if the child will attend a second year of funded kindergarten at another early childhood education and care service*

**Information to help your child’s learning and development**

This may include:

* Your child’s background   
  (e.g. family members, language spoken at home, important family events, etc)
* Your child’s experiences at home and in the community
* Your views about your child returning to kindergarten for a second year
* What your family thinks might help your child continue to build their level of learning and development during a second year of kindergarten

|  |
| --- |
|  |

* What your child likes/what makes them happy
* What your child is looking forward to
* What your child wants to know about their school
* What your child wants their next teacher to know about them

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**Additional information about how your child learns and responds.**

This section applies if your child has additional learning and development needs, a disability or developmental delay.

This section is to be completed by the child’s parent/guardian and aims to gain additional information about how the child learns and responds, to ensure that their learning and development needs are enhanced as much as possible.   
Your child may be receiving extra support from early childhood services. Staff in these services can work with you and your child’s early childhood teacher to complete this section.

For more information visit www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/transitionschool or phone the DEECD Information and Referral Service for your DEECD regional office on 1800 809 834

**Early childhood support service details**   
Please include or attach: (e.g. speech pathologist, occupational therapist, preschool field officer, early childhood intervention or other support service)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of service: |  |
| Address: |  |
| Name of contact person at the service: |  |
| Position: |  |
| Telephone no. (business hours): |  |
| Email address: |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of service: |  |
| Address: |  |
| Name of contact person at the service: |  |
| Position: |  |
| Telephone no. (business hours): |  |
| Email address: |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of service: |  |
| Address: |  |
| Name of contact person at the service: |  |
| Position: |  |
| Telephone no. (business hours): |  |
| Email address: |  |

**Additional information**

**My child learns and responds best when…** *(e.g. humour works well, seating at the front of the group, showing as well as giving instructions, etc)*

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**My child is really interested in…**

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**My child might need some help to…** *(e.g. tie shoelaces, understand long sentences, manage the move between activities, etc)*

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**You can help by…** *(e.g. using a calming activity/music, etc)*

|  |
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**Things that might upset my child...**

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## Information sheet and checklist for completing the Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten

**Confirmation of eligibility of a child to access a second year of funded kindergarten.**

Before completing the *Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten*, services should:

* refer to the current [Kindergarten](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/childrensservices/kindergartenpolicycriteria.pdf) Guide for further information about the eligibility criteria for a second year of funded kindergarten
* have completed and retained on the child’s file a *Term three plan for learning and development* and the *Second Year Discussion*

*Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten* should be completed by the child’s early childhood teacher in collaboration with, and with the consent of, the child’s parent/guardians, by the end of term three of the year the child is accessing their first year of a funded kindergarten program.

Please retain a copy of the completed *Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten* and all other documentation with the child’s enrolment records. All documentation relating to the *Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten* must be available on request by Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) staff for auditing purposes.

Please also provide a copy of the *Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten* to the child’s parent/guardian.

**After completing the *Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten*, ensure the child is re-enrolled in accordance with local requirements.**

Forward the completed *Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten* to the relevant DEECD regional office. Regional office addresses can be found at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/regions.htm>

**Checklist**

*Please ensure the following has been undertaken before submitting the declaration*

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|  | A *Term three plan for learning and development* was completed by the child’s early childhood teacher in collaboration with the child’s parent/guardian, implemented and evaluated and retained with the child’s enrolment records |
|  | The questions in the *Second Year Discussion* have been completed with the child’s parent/guardian and retained with the child’s enrolment records |
|  | The *Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten* has been completed by the child’s early childhood teacher in collaboration with the child’s parent/guardian and a copy has been retained with the child’s enrolment records |
|  | All documentation relating to the assessment and declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten will be retained on the child’s enrolment records and will be available on request by DEECD staff for auditing purposes |
|  | The *Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten* has been completed by the child’s early childhood teacher and a contact name and business telephone number has been provided |
|  | The child’s parent/guardian has signed the *Declaration of consent of the child’s parents/guardians* section of the *Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten* |
|  | A copy of the completed *Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten* has been provided to the child’s parent/guardian |
|  | The child’s early childhood teacher has signed the Teacher certification section of the *Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten* |
|  | The *Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten* has been submitted to the relevant DEECD regional office by the end of term three |
|  | The child has been re-enrolled in accordance with local requirements |
|  | The parent/guardian has been advised to seek school exemption if the child will turn six years of age in the second year of kindergarten |
|  | The *Second Year Statement* will be developed by the child’s early childhood teacher in term four and retained with the child’s enrolment records |

## 

# Glossary

Terms commonly used throughout these guidelines are listed alphabetically and described in the table below.

| **Term** | **Definition** |
| --- | --- |
| Approved education and care service | An education and care service operated by an approved provider, for which a service approval exists (refer to education and care service below). |
| Approved learning framework | Learning frameworks approved under the *National Quality Framework*, which include the *Early Years Learning Framework* and *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework.* |
| Base funding | Base funding comprises kindergarten per capita grant funding and may also include kindergarten fee subsidy, the kindergarten cluster management grant and travel allowance. This funding is calculated on a financial year basis and is paid to the service provider in monthly instalments. |
| Certified payroll service | A payroll service that provides services to the service provider equivalent to those provided by the contractor ADP, which is funded by the Department to provide kindergarten payroll service to community-based not-for-profit service providers. |
| Child Care Benefit (approved) | Child Care Benefit is a Commonwealth Government payment to assist families who use approved child care. |
| Child FIRST | Child and family services information, referral and support teams (Child FIRST). |
| Child Protection | The Victorian Child Protection Service (Child Protection) is part of the Victorian Department of Human Services and provides child-centred, family-focused services to protect children and young people from significant harm resulting from abuse or neglect within the family and aims to ensure that children and young people receive services to deal with the impact of abuse and neglect on their wellbeing and development. |
| Cluster management | See kindergarten cluster management. |
| Community-based organisation | An organisation that is not a ‘for-profit’ organisation. Also known as a community service organisation (CSO). |
| Data collection | The process by which the Department collects information from service providers about services they operate. This information is used to determine the service provider’s funding entitlement and assists in government planning for kindergarten programs. |
| Department of Education and Early Childhood Development | The Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is referred to throughout the *Kindergarten Guide* as the Department. |
| Early childhood teacher | An early childhood teacher is a person who holds an early childhood teaching qualification that is included on the list of approved early childhood teaching qualifications published by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). |
| Early Start Kindergarten extension grant | The Early Start Kindergarten extension grant, outlined in Part C, enables a child to attend a funded kindergarten program free of charge or at minimal cost in the year before school if the child has previously accessed an Early Start Kindergarten grant in the year two years before school and is ineligible for the kindergarten fee subsidy. |
| Early Start Kindergarten grants | The Early Start Kindergarten grant and Aboriginal Early Start Kindergarten grant, outlined in Part C, enable an eligible child to access a kindergarten program in the year two years before school. |

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| *Early Years Learning Framework* | An approved learning framework under the *National Quality Framework*, the *Early Years Learning Framework* describes the principles, practice and outcomes essential to support and enhance young children’s learning from birth to five years of age, as well as their transition to school. The outcomes are shared with the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework*. |
| Education and Care Service | Family day care, long day care, outside school hours care services and preschools (kindergarten services) that must operate in accordance with the *National Quality Framework* are referred to as education and care services. |
| Eligible child | A child that meets the eligibility criteria for kindergarten funding as outlined in this guide. |
| Eligible service provider | A service provider that meets all relevant criteria to receive kindergarten funding as outlined in this guide. |
| For-profit organisation | An organisation defined as ‘for-profit’ in the Australasian Council of Auditors General Advisory Committee's Guidance paper on determining whether a government entity is not-for-profit or for-profit (April 2005). |
| Funded Agency Channel | A web-based application (<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/funded-agency-channel>) that provides easy access to government and organisation information, communication tools and business processes. Through the Funded Agency Channel, service providers can access their service agreement and payment details, standards and guidelines, and link to government and sector resources. |
| Funded kindergarten program | An early childhood educational program delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher to children in the year that is two years before grade one of school, for which funding is received from the Department. In Victoria, a funded kindergarten program complies with all the applicable requirements set out in this guide and provides a developmentally appropriate program in accordance with the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework*. Funded kindergarten programs may operate in a variety of settings, including long day care centres, standalone services, schools, or community centres, and may be operated by a variety of service providers, including community organisations, local councils, schools, not-for-profit organisations or private operators. |
| Funded place | A place in a kindergarten program for which a per capita grant is received. The number of funded places may be based on anticipated enrolment numbers or the confirmed number of children enrolled and attending. |
| Funded place (vacant) | When a child occupying a funded place leaves the service, a vacant funded place is created. Additional enrolments will not be funded if a service has vacant funded places. |
| Funding cycle | Kindergarten funding is paid in two funding cycles. The first cycle covers the period July to December and the second, January to June. |
| Inclusion | Involves taking into account all children’s social, cultural and linguistic diversity (including learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances and geographic location). |
| Indigenous | This term refers to both Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. |
| Integrated long day care program | For the purposes of kindergarten funding, an integrated long day care program is a funded kindergarten program provided as part of a long day care program. |

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| KIM | The Kindergarten Information Management System (KIM), an online web-based system developed by the Department for funding applications, data collection, and reporting, which will commence operation in 2013. |
| Kindergarten | In Victoria, kindergarten is an early childhood educational program delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher to children in the year that is two years before grade one of school. The term preschool is used nationally to refer to this program. |
| Kindergarten cluster management | Kindergarten cluster management brings together a group of community-based kindergarten services under the management of a single service provider. It is a key strategy to building a stronger, responsive universal kindergarten system. |
| Kindergarten for three-year-old children | Programs provided by education and care services for three-year-old children. Ideally these programs are delivered by an early childhood teacher. |
| Kindergarten payroll service | A payroll service funded by the Department provided by ADP Australia/New Zealand for community-based not-for-profit service providers receiving kindergarten funding. |
| LGECEEA | Local Government Early Childhood Education Employees’ Agreement. In Victoria, most early childhood educators in local government-run kindergarten programs are employed under the terms and conditions of this agreement. The LGECCEA describes applicable employment standards. |
| Long day care service | A centre-based form of child care service providing all day or part-time care programs for children. Private operators, local councils, community organisations, employers or not-for-profit organisations provide these services. |
| *National Law* and *National Regulations* | The legislative framework, which is a component of the *National Quality Framework,* consisting of:   * the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (the National Law) and * the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (the National Regulations). |
| *National Quality Framework* | The *National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care* (the *National Quality Framework*) took effect on 1 January 2012. It applies to most preschools (kindergartens), long day care, family day care and outside school hours care services, and aims to raise quality and drive continuous improvement and consistency in education and care services, with a focus on outcomes for children. |
| Non-base funding | Any kindergarten funding that is provided as a one-off payment on receipt of an application, including: teacher supplement, kindergarten cluster start-up grant and parental leave reimbursement. |
| Non-government school | A Catholic or Independent school that is not conducted by or on behalf of the Victorian Government. |
| Parent | Throughout the *Kindergarten Guide* the term parent is used to represent parents, guardians and/or primary carers. |
| Parental leave reimbursement | Service providers that pay parental leave entitlements to early childhood teachers and assistants in a funded kindergarten program are eligible to apply for up to 14 weeks’ reimbursement. |
| Payment history report | A report that enables the service provider to reconcile funding. This report is provided to the service provider following the January and July payment adjustments and when there are other changes to funding. |

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| Preschool | An early childhood educational program delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher to children in the year that is two years before grade one of school. In Victoria, preschool is referred to as kindergarten. |
| Pro rata funding | Funding provided to service providers calculated for the period of time that the child has been enrolled in and attending the funded kindergarten program. |
| Regional offices | The Department’s offices located across the state which manage service agreements with service providers that provide a funded kindergarten program. |
| Remittance advice | Written advice sent to service providers advising of the amount of funding credited to their bank accounts. |
| Second year funding | Per capita funding provided for children who meet the eligibility criteria for a second year of funded kindergarten. |
| Service | The approved education and care service (location) from which a kindergarten program is delivered. |
| Service agreement | An agreement setting out the terms and conditions of funding from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to the service provider. It outlines the requirements of services to be delivered and the associated funding that will be paid to a service provider to deliver the services. Schedule 3 of the service agreement includes a service plan outlining the specific services to be provided by the service provider, corresponding funding, performance measures and targets, service standards and guidelines and data collection requirements. |
| Service provider | A legal entity or organisation that has entered, or is seeking to enter into a service agreement with the Department, receives the kindergarten funding, and has responsibility for the management of funds and delivery of kindergarten programs. A service provider may be responsible for the provision of kindergarten programs in a number of services. In this guide the approved provider of an education and care service from which a kindergarten program is offered is also referred to as a service provider. |
| Small rural grants initiative | Service providers receiving per capita funding at the small rural rate receive an annual grant of up to $20,000 to support access to affordable kindergarten programs in small rural communities. |
| Transition Learning and Development Statement | A document, allowing families and educators to share information about a child’s learning and development, which funded kindergarten programs are required to prepare for every enrolled child transitioning into school the following year. |
| Validation process for early childhood teachers | A process, managed and administered by Vocational Education and Training Assessment Services (VETASSESS), by which teachers can progress from one level to another in accordance with applicable employment agreements. |
| VECTAA | Victorian Early Childhood Teachers and Assistants Agreement. In Victoria, most early childhood educators in community-based organisations providing kindergarten programs are employed under the terms and conditions of this agreement. The VECTAA describes applicable employment standards. |

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| Victorian Children’s Service | The following services:   * all limited hours and short term licensed services * a small number of other services that currently hold a standard licence including budget-based services not funded for Child Care Benefit * occasional care services * early childhood intervention services * mobile services and * a small number of school holiday care programs   that continue to operate under the Victorian:   * [*Children’s Services Act 1996*](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/CSAct1996-53a020.pdf) * [*Children’s Services Regulations 2009*](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/CSRegulations2009-53sr001.pdf)   are referred to as [Victorian Children’s Services](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/educareservices/vcs/default.htm). |
| *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* | An approved framework under the *National Quality Framework* that is a guide for all professionals in Victoria who work with children from birth to eight years, which identifies outcomes for children and describes practice principles for families and professionals to facilitate learning and development and includes guidance and information regarding transition to school. |
| Vulnerable children | Children and young people who are at risk of abuse and neglect because of their particular circumstances, which may include: living in a family with a low income, or one which is experiencing problems with housing, domestic violence, substance abuse, or mental health; having a culturally and linguistically diverse background; having a young or sole parent, or a parent with a disability. |

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# Notes and supplements

1. A small number of services, including Multifunctional Aboriginal Children’s Services and some mobile rural kindergarten services, are excluded from the *National Quality Framework* and are instead licensed in accordance with the Victorian *Children’s Services Act 1996* (Victorian Act) and *Children’s Services Regulations 2009* (Victorian Regulations). Preschool (kindergarten) programs delivered in a composite class in a school (that is, where the program is delivered in a class or classes where a full-time education program is also being delivered to school children and the program is delivered to fewer than six children in the school), are excluded from the *National Quality Framework* and are instead regulated under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Victorian Government, *Victoria’s Vulnerable Children – Our Shared Responsibility* May 2012, p. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Victorian Government, *Victoria’s Vulnerable Children – Our Shared Responsibility* May 2012, p. 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. This criterion is not applicable if: an approved education and care service has not yet been assessed against the National Quality Standard, in which case it will have a rating of ‘Provisional – Not yet assessed’; a service is excluded from the *National Quality Framework* and is instead regulated under the Victorian Act and Regulations or the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, in which case the service provider must undertake an assessment using the National Quality Standard as a guide, and submit an appropriate quality improvement plan with their annual financial statements. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. As children have individual needs some parents may choose not to have their child attend the kindergarten program for all hours offered at the start of the year. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. This criterion will not applicable if: an approved education and care service has not yet been assessed against the National Quality Standard, in which case it will have a rating of ‘Provisional – Not yet assessed’; a service is excluded from the *National Quality Framework* and is instead regulated under the Victorian Act and Regulations or the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, in which case the service provider must undertake an assessment using the National Quality Standard as a guide, and submit an appropriate quality improvement plan with their annual financial statements. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Services may elect to seek independent legal advice if concerned about the compliance of their policies. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)